



TOWN OF HARWICH LOCAL COMPREHENSIVE PLAN

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VISION STATEMENT

We the people of Harwich have come together to create this vision statement for the 2011 Local Comprehensive Plan which will direct the energies of the Town's employees, volunteers and elected officials for the next five years.

Our vision has efficient and effective delivery of Town services as the top priority. It directs us to optimize the economic potential of all Town owned assets. Safety and security for all is paramount. We must have a superlative educational system for our students and rewarding activities for our seniors. We cannot fail to recognize, protect and enhance the vitality of our cultural, recreational and natural assets that are so essential to our residents, non-resident taxpayers, and seasonal guests alike.

To be effective, Harwich must be supported at the County, State and Federal levels. Harwich officials are charged with ensuring that the Town receives fair and equitable treatment and with pursuing legislative remedies when needed.

Pursuit of this vision pays homage to our unique coastal environment and vibrant New England traditions of independence and self-determination.

INTRODUCTION

The 2011 Local Comprehensive Plan (LCP) for the Town of Harwich describes the process of achieving the town's vision. In this plan, we summarize the most important issues facing the town for the next five years. The plan identifies important issues, recommends actions to be taken to address them, and assigns actions to responsible town entities. Where appropriate, measures of success are provided.

This plan has evolved over a two-year period from initial discussion by the Planning Board in May 2009 to presentation at Town meeting in May 2011. At the outset, the Planning Board made clear its intention to create a focused plan that would omit long descriptions and would detail specific actions to be pursued over the next five years. A vision statement sets the tone of the document. The first four sections of the plan – population, town services, town assets, and intergovernmental relations - are organized in accordance with the words of the vision statement. Additional required elements of a local comprehensive plan are presented in the next two sections on growth management. The next section addresses communication and technology, themes that run throughout the entire plan.

With a focus on specific actions, this plan repeatedly follows a process of ideation, study, debate/evaluation, consensus, and ratification. Throughout, plans must be developed and agreed upon before funding and other implementation techniques are identified and pursued. Repeatedly, the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board are listed as responsible parties. Often the role of these two boards is to provide guidance while many others are involved in plan development and implementation. All recommendations in this plan are advisory, but the Planning Board believes that the town will be well-served if these recommendations are pursued.

With the goal of producing a plan that is readable and usable, the main body of the document has been kept at about 40 pages. For those readers who seek more detailed information, several appendices are available. Appendix A provides a list of hyperlinks to other resources. Appendix B describes the planning process used to develop this plan. Appendix C contains important review comments by other parties that the Planning Board did not include in the main body of the plan. Appendices D and E contain two recently approved plans that offer extensive policy direction for the town – the Housing Production Plan and the Open Space and Recreation Plan. Appendices F and G contain two items required for regional certification of the plan – Consistency with Regional Plan Goals and Build-out Study.

As directed by the Town Charter, the Planning Board will report annually on the status of the master plan. Guidance for short-term and longer-term actions is provided in the implementation section. Implementation efforts, led by the Board of Selectmen and Planning Board, should begin immediately after approval of the plan. The annual review will address the status of high priority actions and will highlight new or continuing priorities for the next year.

1) POPULATION BEING SERVED

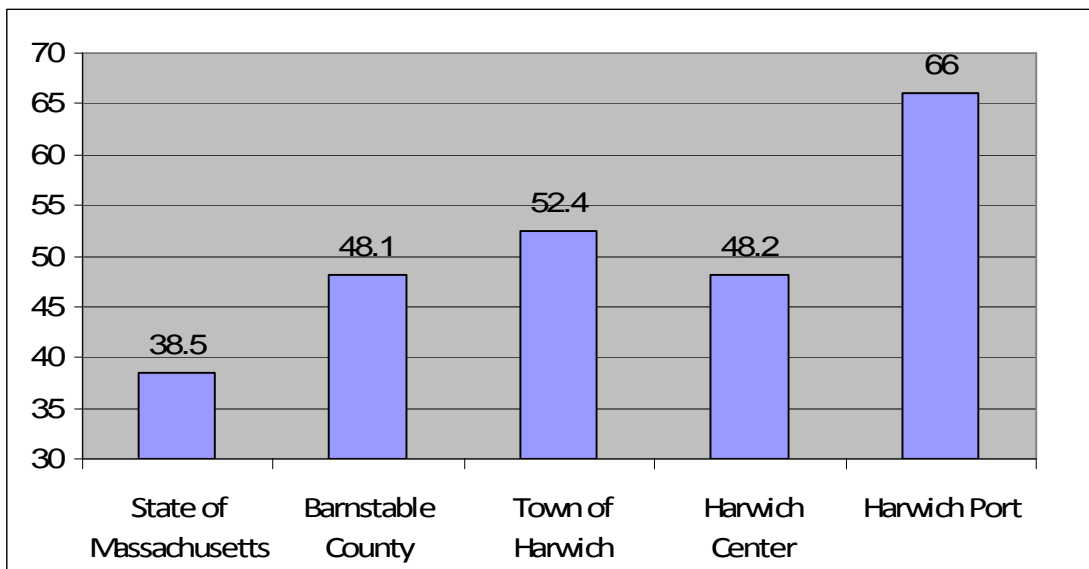
“We the people of Harwich have come together ... ”

A plan for the future of Harwich begins with an understanding of its people. This section describes several characteristics of the town’s population and trends that are likely to affect the need for town services in the near future. Responses to trends, such as actions relating to affordable housing and economic development, are provided in subsequent sections of this plan.

Aging Population

With a year-round population of 12,316 in 2009, Harwich is the largest of 8 towns on the lower and outer cape. One of the most striking demographic elements of Harwich is the age of its population. Figure 1 compares the median age of Harwich and two of its villages to the county and state.

Figure 1: Median Age, Year 2009
Town, County and State



Source: US Census 2005-2009 5-year estimates

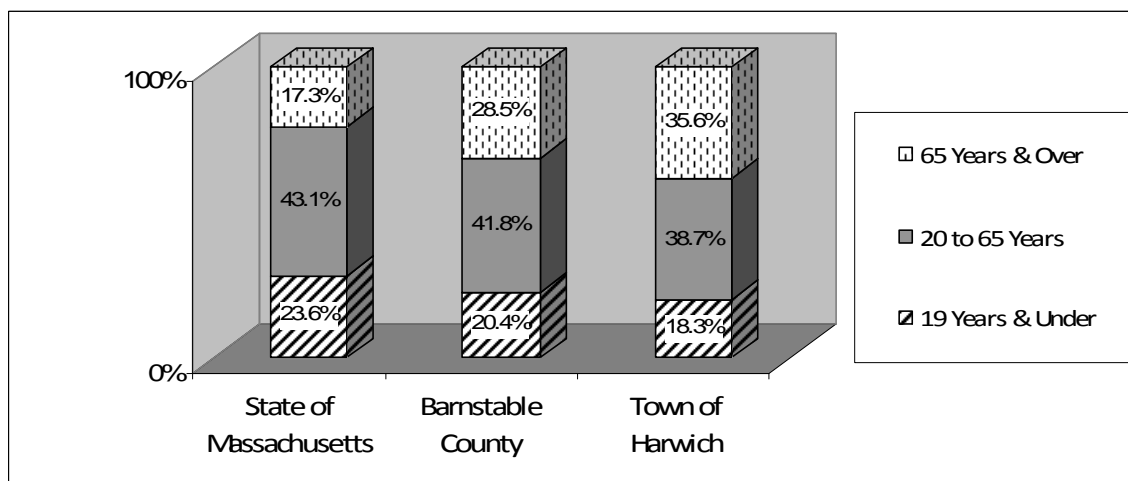
Note: Harwich Planning Staff questions the 5-year estimate of 66 as the median age for Harwich Port, noting that it represents a significant increase from 58 in the 2000 census count. This figure should be updated as soon as the 2010 census count is available.

Figure 2 further demonstrates the characteristics of Harwich as an older community. The percentage of seniors (age 65 and above) is higher than both county and state while the percentage of children and teenagers (up to age 19) is lower. Other statistics show that the percentage of young adults, age 20 to 30, in the total Harwich population is even lower when

compared to Barnstable County and Massachusetts. Many young people leave Cape Cod to pursue post-high school education, government service or other activities. More of them would return if year-round employment opportunities were greater.

The aging of Harwich is likely to be a continuing trend. By 2008, the percentage of age 60+ population had increased to 38.5%, a moderate increase from the year 2000 percentage of 35.6%. The [Council on Aging Strategic Plan, 2009-2019](#) estimates that the percentage of seniors will exceed 60% of the year-round population of Harwich by year 2020. The Strategic Plan also notes the different programs and services needed for segments of the senior population that may be differentiated by level of activity (active vs. sedentary) or by age (60-70 vs. 71-85 vs. 85+).

Figure 2, Population by Age Group, Year 2009
Town, County and State



Source: US Census 2005-2009 5-year estimates

Declining School Population

School systems, dependent on the number of schoolchildren in calculating State education aid, are very familiar with the trend towards fewer children. In mid-2009, the Director of Demographic Forecasts for New England Economic Partnership gave a presentation to school officials on demographic trends and impacts on lower and outer cape public schools. Declines in school enrollment from 2000 to 2008 included:

- Pre-K and K - 6% decline
- Grades 1-5 – 25% decline
- Middle school – 21% decline
- High school – 6% decline

Declining school enrollments cause greater difficulty in running a school district at a reasonable cost and in offering a wide variety of educational and extra-curricular activities, especially at the high school level. In response to these difficulties, the Town of Harwich voted in December 2010 to form a regional school district with Chatham (see Section 2).

The decline in the number of children and young adults combined with the rapid increase of those in the 55 – 64 age group will likely result in lower labor force growth and a long-term shift in state funding priorities from public education to elderly services.

Summer vs. Winter Population

Harwich's population fluctuates greatly from summer to winter. Seasonal population includes household occupants, second-home owners or renters, and "transient" renters of hotel/motel rooms. Table 1 gives the Harwich Planning Department's estimate of summer vs. year-round population, based on input from the Harwich Chamber of Commerce and the Harwich Assessing Department.

Table 1, Summer vs. Year-Round Population

	Year-Round Population	Summer-Only Household Population	Summer Transient Population	Total Summer Population	Year-Round % of Summer Population
2000	12,386	13,991	1,291	27,668	44.77%
2005	12,593	14,542	1,150	28,285	44.52%

Source: Harwich Planning Department

The lower cape is becoming more of a retirement community. This trend is described in the UMass Donahue Institute "2008 Survey of Cape Cod Second Home Owners" which found that 25% of second home owners on the lower cape say they intend to occupy their home as their primary residence within the next 15 years. Likely economic implications, according to this study, include:

- increased purchasing of local goods and services – clothing, household goods, recreation equipment, banking, insurance, etc.
- increased use of cultural venues – theatre, music, museums, etc.
- decreased availability of seasonal rental units
- some employment expectations of new residents.

A competing observation is that the majority of home purchases, at least initially, are for seasonal use. Newly-purchased older homes often are upgraded to make them capable of year-round living. However, the actual conversion to year-round use may be delayed for a decade or more. In short, the percentage of year-round residents has not increased yet (see Table 1), but the likelihood of a greater retirement trend bears watching.

Income Sources

According to the US Census, the 2009 median household income in Harwich was \$53,607 per year, well below the State median income of \$64,496. Nationally and in Massachusetts most income (approximately 80%) is derived from work earnings. In contrast, only 64.6% of Harwich residents derive their income from work. Many households in Harwich

rely on retirement income and social security. Fortunately, for the many elderly residents who rely on retirement rather than earned income, property taxes are relatively low. Most homeowners are able to continue living in their homes despite very modest incomes.

Future Growth

The focus of this section has been on key population characteristics in Harwich, such as an aging population and seasonal/retirement trends, rather than on future growth. Total population in Harwich is not anticipated to grow quickly. As noted in the 2010 Open Space and Recreation Plan, the rate of growth slowed from a 58% increase in population between 1960 and 1970 to a 21% increase between 1990 and 2000 and an almost level population in the 2000s. Regardless of the growth rate, Harwich must plan for growth that may occur. This topic is discussed further under Growth Management in Sections 5 and 6.

2) DELIVERY OF TOWN SERVICES

“Our vision has efficient and effective delivery of Town services as the top priority. It directs us to maximize the tax base and optimize the economic potential of all Town owned assets. Safety and security for all is paramount. We must have a superlative educational system for our students and rewarding activities for our seniors.”

Fiscal Challenges

Over the years, Harwich voters have supported a generous level of programs and facilities. Major departments with large budgets include police, fire, public works and schools. In addition to basic town functions, we also have an impressive Community Center that houses the Council on Aging, Channel 18 TV, and the Recreation and Youth Department. Other worthwhile services not found in every town include the Albro House for youth services, Harwich Junior Theater, shellfish lab, beaches, harbors, and municipal golf course. The challenge, in our current difficult fiscal environment, is to maintain the level and quality of these services.

In better fiscal times, the Town created infrastructure and rewarded town employees with longevity and other annual increases in salaries and benefits. Now, infrastructure must be maintained or replaced. With a positive vote in December 2010 on school regionalization, plans are proceeding for construction of a new high school in Harwich and renovation of the Chatham middle school with an estimated \$2,000,000 annual debt service for Harwich taxpayers. Even greater costs are likely to be associated with new wastewater treatment infrastructure.

The Planning Board urges that special attention be given to the issue of wastewater infrastructure. Multi-million dollar estimated construction costs will impact the ability to live and work in Harwich. Wastewater treatment options and their associated costs will influence how and where growth in the town will proceed.

Several challenges related to Town income sources should be recognized:

- State aid has declined dramatically in recent years, and this trend is not likely to reverse in the near future.
- Grants have been used to fund road projects, police officers, building improvements, and other projects. Additional grants may be explored for such items as harbor infrastructure, bikeways/sidewalks, and wastewater treatment.

- The Board of Selectmen has asked Town departments – e.g. Harbormaster and Recreation and Youth - to consider fee increases to ensure that users pay the appropriate share of services provided by the Town.
- Harwich property taxes are the 23rd lowest of 328 approved tax rates in the State. Despite low tax rates, an increase in property taxes would place a significant burden on certain segments of the population – families who have lost one or more wage earners, seniors who wish to remain in their homes but have limited income, etc.

Other challenges exist in relation to expenses:

- Employee salaries represent 65% of the municipal budget and 75% of the school budget. Adequate compensation is important to motivate employees to continue to provide quality public service, but it also must be affordable
- Proposition 2½ limits the annual increase in property taxes to 2.5% plus the amount attributable to taxes from new real property unless voters approve an override, debt exclusion or capital outlay exclusion.
- The 2.5% annual limit does not reflect greater rates of increase in important expense categories such as health benefits.
- In recent years, the Board of Selectmen has attempted to limit override requests, often causing departments to reduce services so that budgets will stay within the 2.5% limit.

This Local Comprehensive Plan recognizes that fiscal decisions are made by the Board of Selectmen, reviewed by the Finance Committee, and ultimately accepted or rejected by voters at Town Meeting. In making fiscal decisions, the town must first ensure that all essential services are provided along with sufficient funding levels. Beyond providing annual essentials, fiscal policy makers must also prioritize policy goals and future needs such as those described below.

The [FY2012-2018 Capital Plan](#) includes major expenses that will be financed largely by debt exclusions, will have substantial impact on taxes, and will necessitate rigorous cost containment by the Town:

- Dredging of the Allen Harbor basin (\$2.9m in FY2012)
- Expansion of the East Harwich fire station (\$2m in FY2012)
- Wastewater construction (\$5m annually beginning in FY2014).

Many of the recommendations of this Local Comprehensive Plan have expenses associated with them:

- Action 2.5.1 – Provide facilities and staffing for youth service activities
- Action 2.6.1 – Determine timetable and funding sources for construction of facilities for seniors
- Action 5.6.1 - Provide at least one direct route, suitable for pedestrian and bicycle travel, between Harwich Center and Harwich Port
- Action 5.7.2 - Pursue acquisition of the Downey property adjacent to Saquatucket Harbor

- Action 5.9.1 – In Harwich Center, pursue local parking and wastewater treatment options to assist local businesses
- Action 6.2.1 – Identify projects and funding sources for affordable housing
- Action 6.4.3 - Explore opportunities for remote parking lots and shuttle bus service for harbors, beaches and other sites
- Action 6.5.1 - Select a proposed wastewater management plan that is technically sound and cost effective
- Action 7.1.1 - Employ a webmaster to make organizational and accessibility improvements to the website

The significant challenge facing the town is to accomplish planning goals, capital projects and other actions requiring town expense in a fiscally responsible and sustainable manner. Establishment of priorities and determination of funding approaches will be an on-going effort that is central to town government.

GOAL: Provide municipal services at a reasonable cost.

OBJECTIVE 2.1 Determine appropriate standards for baseline municipal services and efficient means for delivering those services.

ACTION 2.1.1 Determine baseline services for all municipal departments and prepare annual budgets needed to deliver those services.

Responsible Parties – Department heads, Town Administrator

Timeline/Measures of Success – Annual completion of draft budgets for presentation to the Board of Selectmen.

ACTION 2.1.2 Explore options for delivering services more efficiently including advances in technology, adjustment of job responsibilities, cost-sharing, regionalization of services, and use of contract services.

Responsible Parties – Internal - department heads, Town Administrator; external – board members, study committees and other individuals.

Timeline/Measures of Success – Annual review prior to completion of Action 2.1.1.

OBJECTIVE 2.2 Determine desired additional municipal facilities and services and their impact on the municipal budget.

ACTION 2.2.1 Prioritize new facilities and services based on coordinated review of the Capital Plan, Local Comprehensive Plan, and other available sources. Determine start-up and on-going costs. Whenever possible, seek use of outside grants, user fees and other revenues not related to property taxes. Where other funding sources are not available, encourage town meeting votes on desired facility upgrades and expanded services via budget overrides, debt exclusions or capital outlay exclusions.

Responsible Parties – Board of Selectmen, Finance Committee, Capital Outlay Committee, Planning Board.

Timeline/Measures of Success – Prior to and during the annual budget process.

Municipal Services – Target Areas

GOAL: Target efforts towards those segments of the Harwich population that are in need of specific municipal services.

Safety and Security

Fire, emergency and police services are of particular importance to Harwich because of the nature of the Town's population. With retirement trends likely to increase, a greater percentage of Harwich's population will be over age 60; and a significant number will be in the very old or other high-needs categories. The Town must continue to provide appropriate levels of service to meet the needs of this population.

OBJECTIVE 2.3 Determine standards for providing essential emergency medical and other public safety services and efficient means for delivering those services.

ACTION 2.3.1 Police and Fire Departments shall monitor the type and frequency of emergency medical calls and other public safety services. Reports shall be provided regularly to the Town Administration and the Board of Selectmen and shall serve as a basis for determining departmental funding levels.

Responsible Parties – Police Department, Fire Department, Town Administrator's Office, Board of Selectmen.

Timeline/Measures of Success – Reports shall be provided at least annually prior to the budgeting process.

Education

Our plan calls for a "superlative" educational system. As noted in Section 1, declining school enrollments have posed a significant challenge in meeting that goal. Recognizing that challenge and with urging from the Massachusetts School Building Authority, voters in Chatham and Harwich authorized a study of combining the two town school systems into a single regional district. After an intensive 3-year study, the two towns voted in December 2010 to regionalize. Additional details are available at the [Chatham-Harwich Regionalization website](#).

An intensive effort by educators in both communities will be required over the next few years. Current projections are that a new high school will open in Harwich in September 2014 and a renovated middle school will open in Chatham one year later. Elementary schools will continue to operate in each town.

Fiscal challenges will not diminish with regionalization of the school systems. The transition period will pose its own unique challenges. School officials must meet early and often with the Town Administration and Board of Selectmen to determine appropriate allocation of limited resources.

While most future education decisions will be made by regional educators, town hall officials must respond to the important challenge of reuse of existing school property no longer needed for town educational purposes after regionalization. In particular, the middle school building is a valuable structure that could be used for housing, education or other purposes.

OBJECTIVE 2.4 Determine appropriate reuse of the middle school after regionalization.

ACTION 2.4.1 Appoint a committee to study opportunities for reuse of the middle school building.

Responsible Parties – Board of Selectmen, School Department

Timeline/Measures of Success – A committee should be appointed in 2011.

Youth and Community

Harwich's schools provide structured activities for its youth, including both academic and extra-curricular programs. However, a significant amount of time for many teenagers and pre-teens is not filled with organized activities. Some programs and facilities are currently available in Harwich. Brooks Free Library provides a safe environment and attracts many young people for homework assistance, computer access and free social and recreational programs every weekday afternoon. Extended weekday early evening hours allow parents to pick up youth after work. The Community Center is a multi-purpose facility suitable for many functions. The Youth Services Committee has sponsored teen nights, movie nights, dances and other safe events in the community for youth between the ages of 12 and 18. However, greater effort is needed to identify activities, provide staffing, and maximize use of available facilities.

Examples of youth activities that may be considered are:

- "Cadet corps" for high-school kids to learn Emergency Medical Training. Cadets may be trained by American Red Cross or other suitable agency to do minor first aid, help with gurneys, and perform other support activities.
- "Conservation corps" to participate in environmental protection efforts.

OBJECTIVE 2.5 Provide safe, enjoyable activities for youth that will minimize boredom and the more serious problems of substance abuse and criminal activity.

ACTION 2.5.1 Conduct a coordinated effort by all Town entities currently providing youth services. Jointly prepare a plan of activities and needed facilities and staffing. Identify funding sources - including Town funds, fundraising activities, and user fees. Implement additional activities and monitor use.

Responsible Parties – School Department, Recreation and Youth Commission, Youth Services Committee, Community Center Staff, Brook Free Library Staff.

Timeline/Measures of Success - Complete the plan and funding needs prior to the next Town budget cycle. Begin additional activities in the next fiscal year. Provide reports on levels of use on a regular basis.

Seniors

The Council on Aging has an important presence in the Community Center for many of its programs and services for seniors. Suggestions have been made regarding the expansion of facilities, including renovation of the basement level of the building and construction of a swimming pool. Equally important are the various outreach programs provided by the Council of Aging that enable seniors to continue living in their homes.

OBJECTIVE 2.6 Provide appropriate expansion of facilities for seniors.

ACTION 2.6.1 Establish a subcommittee with representation from all Town entities involved in providing senior services and managing facilities. Review facility needs including population served, construction costs, funding sources and maintenance costs. Determine timetable and funding sources for construction of facilities.

The work of the subcommittee should specifically include study of a swimming pool and should consider the entire range of age groups that may be served. It also should consider all potential locations including the Community Center and the new regional high school.

Responsible Parties – Community Center Facilities Committee, Council on Aging, Friends of the Council on Aging, School Department

Timeline/Measures of Success – Establish a subcommittee in 2011 and provide a report to the Board of Selectmen in early 2012.

OBJECTIVE 2.7 Continue to provide essential services under the direction of the Council on Aging and explore costs and benefits of expanded services.

ACTION 2.7.1 In accordance with its *Strategic Plan, 2009 – 2019*, the Council on Aging shall continue and expand efforts to provide meals, nursing care and other services.

Responsible Parties – Council on Aging

Timeline/Measures of Success - The Council on Aging shall determine annually the type and level of services to be offered in time for budget presentations to the Board of Selectmen. Success will be achieved if provision of senior services and communication with individual seniors has a preventative impact on the need for emergency services.

Other Services

The Town offers many other services including those described below. Individual departments have developed their own descriptions of activities and future plans.

The [Public Works Department](#) oversees highways and sidewalks; the transfer station/recycle center; street tree plantings; and maintenance for buildings, vehicles, parks, cemeteries, and beaches. Major upcoming projects are reconstruction of Route 137 from the Brewster Town Line to the Chatham Town Line and reconstruction of Route 124 from Headwaters Drive to the Brewster Town Line. Both projects include new sidewalks and widened shoulders for vehicle safety and bicycle use. Other highway projects are listed in the [Five Year Road Maintenance Plan](#).

The [Recreation and Youth Department](#) oversees parks, fields, beaches and recreation programs. Identified needs are listed in Appendix I of the [2010 Open Space and Recreation Plan](#). The Recreation and Youth Commission also is working on its own 5-year plan.

The [Harbormaster/Natural Resources Department](#) oversees harbors; [dredging and beach nourishment](#); and operations relating to shellfish, herring and eel populations. A [waterfront engineering study](#) completed in 2009 by Coastal Engineering identified between \$5.5 and \$7.5 million in needed improvements over the next decade.

The Golf Committee oversees operations of the [Cranberry Valley Golf Course](#). Major projects planned for the next decade are described in the [August 2009 10-Year Cranberry Valley Capital Plan](#).

The [Harwich Community Center](#) is home to the Council on Aging, Recreation and Youth Department, Channel 18 studio, activity rooms, gymnasium and weight room. Special activities include elections, Town meetings, flu clinics, and Emergency Management training. The Community Center is exploring expansion of facilities including a swimming pool to serve seniors and other residents as described earlier in this section.

The [Brooks Free Library](#) serves all segments of the population – children, youth, families, working-age people, seniors and people with disabilities. It provides recreational reading and audiovisual materials, reference services and resources, public access computers, 24/7 wireless hotspots at the Library and Brooks Academy Museum, and cultural, educational and informational programs.

The [Water Department](#) provides water service to the entire town. The Water Department is continuing its efforts to develop a new water supply at Site 10, a well field in the northwest corner of the town. The department also is currently building a major new treatment facility to remove iron and manganese from the town's water supply. The facility should be operational in November 2011. In the next 10 years as financial ability permits, the Water Department will be replacing water mains installed in the 1930s.

3) CULTURAL, RECREATIONAL AND NATURAL ASSETS

“We cannot fail to recognize, protect and enhance the vitality of our cultural, recreational and natural assets that are so essential to our residents, non-resident taxpayers, and seasonal guests alike.”

GOAL: Protect the assets of the town while enabling use at reasonable levels and in a conscientious manner.

Harwich is justifiably proud of its many cultural, recreational and natural assets. A variety of documents and websites provide useful information about these assets.

Cultural

A description of historic Harwich Center is found on the [Town of Harwich Website](#). Prominent historic buildings include the Brooks Free Library and the Brooks Academy Museum, documented by [The Harwich Historical Society](#). The town’s cultural heritage includes landscape features as well as buildings. In 2007, the [Harwich Heritage Landscape Report](#), prepared by Boston University Preservation Studies students under the direction of Cape Cod Commission staff, documented cultural heritage resources in Harwich. These resources include cranberry bogs, the Herring River corridor, Ocean Grove (“The Campgrounds”), Wixon Dock, and others.

The Historic District Commission reviews exterior modifications and proposed demolition of structures within the historic district and other historically significant buildings. The current historic district was designated in 1972 and covers portions of Harwich Center. Proposals have been made to expand the boundaries of the district to additional properties in Harwich Center and to create a new historic district or special zoning district at “The Campgrounds” in Harwich Port.

The Historic District Commission oversaw preparation of a town-wide list of historically significant buildings in 2002. With the passage of almost 10 years, some houses on the list have been demolished and some will newly qualify under the requirement that historically significant buildings must be “constructed prior to 100 years before the present calendar year”.

OBJECTIVE 3.1: Review boundaries of the historic district, recommend any updates, and prepare by-law revisions.

ACTION 3.1.1: Review potential parcels to be added to the district in accordance with historic district goals. Involve property owners and other interested parties in the review process.

Responsible Parties - Historic District Commission, Board of Selectmen.

Timeline/Measures of Success – Complete review in 2011 followed by inclusion on the warrant for the next available Town Meeting.

OBJECTIVE 3.2: Maintain the list of historically significant buildings.

ACTION 3.2.1: Conduct a study to update the list of historically significant buildings - remove demolished buildings, review construction dates to include all buildings over 100 years old, and determine buildings that are historically noteworthy or otherwise qualify as significant.

Responsible Parties - Historic District Commission.

Timeline/Measures of Success – Pursue funding in 2012 for study to be completed within six months after funding is obtained.

Recreational

The [Harwich Recreation and Youth Website](#) describes beaches, parks, fields and current programs. The Harwich Recreation and Youth Commission is in the process of completing a five-year plan for recreation improvements. As part of that on-going planning effort, the Recreation Department listed several identified needs in the [2010 Open Space and Recreation Plan](#) (Appendix I). As noted in parentheses, several of these needs already have been addressed:

- New restroom facilities at Pleasant Road, Fernandez Bog and Sand Pond beaches (restrooms for Pleasant Road beach are in the draft FY12 budget)
- New boathouse at Sand Pond or Cahoon Pond
- New swimming lesson docks at Sand Pond (funded in FY11)
- Additional parking, two more tennis courts, picnic area, and new basketball court at Brooks Park
- New infield at Whitehouse Field
- New multi-purpose fields at the Community Center (under construction)
- Explore construction and maintenance costs for a new swimming pool.

OBJECTIVE 3.3: Complete the 5-year Recreation Plan.

ACTION 3.3.1: Ensure compatibility with the Open Space and Recreation Plan and adopt the plan.

Responsible Parties – Recreation and Youth Commission, Conservation Commission.

Timeline/Measures of Success – Complete in 2011.

Natural Assets

The Town of Harwich contains 20.93 square miles (13,395 acres) of land area and 10.9 miles of tidal shoreline. As documented in the Open Space and Recreation Plan, the town includes extensive Town-owned land and other open space:

Owner/Manager	Parcels	Acres	Per Cent
Board of Selectmen	188	670	5.0%
Conservation Commission	172	958	7.2%
Other Town Departments	50	683	5.1%
State of Massachusetts	36	266	2.0%
Conservation Trusts	94	347	2.6%
TOTAL	540	2924	21.8%

The [2010 Open Space and Recreation Plan](#) also contains extensive inventories of other town assets:

- Geology, soils and topography
- Landscape character
- Water resource protection
- Flood hazard areas
- Freshwater wetlands
- Saltwater wetlands and beaches
- Upland and wetland vegetation
- Critical habitats, and
- Scenic resources.

The plan describes a number of environmental challenges: (1) protection of water quality and habitat in the Pleasant Bay watershed, a designated Area of Critical Environmental Concern, (2) soil erosion and/or accretion along the shoreline of Nantucket sound, (3) impact from new development and a move toward public sewerage and treatment of wastewater, (4) protection of critical habitats – coastal plain ponds, cedar swamps, salt marshes, barrier beaches and vernal pools, and (5) protection of wildlife habitats and corridors including fish runs.

The initial 1998 Open Space and Recreation Plan focused heavily on acquisition of open space land. Use of Cape Cod Land Bank and Community Preservation Act funds enabled the town to acquire significant land between 1998 and adoption of the latest Open Space and Recreation Plan in 2010. While further purchase or other acquisition of open space remains important, many of the goals and objectives of the new plan are related to management of town-owned open space land.

With current fiscal limitations, the Town must be careful about open space parcels that it chooses to acquire. Sensitive lands, such as wetlands, may not require public acquisition to remain protected. Zoning techniques, such as natural resource protection districts, may cluster development in a pattern that avoids valuable open space land. Other techniques, such as transfer of development rights, may help reduce the number of new homes in drinking water protection and other sensitive districts. Donation of conservation easements may offer private tax benefits without requiring public expenditure. Before acquiring any parcel in town that has conservation value, the Town should carefully consider all available preservation options.

OBJECTIVE 3.4 Manage existing open space efficiently.

ACTION 3.4.1 Identify priority land management areas and prepare land management plans in accordance with Goal II of the 2010 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Responsible Parties – Conservation Commission, Trails Committee

Timeline/Measures of Success – Identify priorities in 2011. Start initial land management plans in 2011 and continue annually.

OBJECTIVE 3.5 Pursue selective acquisition of new open space.

ACTION 3.5.1 Involve policy-making boards, advisory boards and technical staff in establishing priorities for new acquisitions. Begin with a review of parcel rankings and other criteria from Goal III of the 2010 Open Space and Recreation Plan. As part of the acquisition process, determine funding sources and impacts on local property taxes and consider other available means for open space protection.

Responsible Parties – Board of Selectmen, Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Real Estate and Open Space Committee, Community Preservation Committee, Trails Committee, Conservation and Planning Departments.

Timeline/Measures of Success – On-going

Other goals and objectives in the 2010 Open Space and Recreation Plan include development of trail systems, growth management strategies, preservation and enhancement of natural resources, preservation and enhancement of unique natural and manmade features and resources, and enhanced opportunities for passive and active recreation.

Two additional resources for information on watersheds and water quality protection are the [Harwich Water Department Website](#) and [Pleasant Bay Resource Management Alliance](#).

4) INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

“To be effective, Harwich must be supported at the County, State and Federal levels. Harwich officials are charged with ensuring that the Town receives fair and equitable treatment and with pursuing legislative remedies when needed.”

GOAL: Have a more effective voice in conveying the needs of the Town to legislators.

Harwich is a fiscally responsible and deficit free Town. It has a proud history of providing for its needs and for its wants through appropriate and visible financial processes. In recent years, the Town’s ability to cope with financial challenges such as health care, energy, wages and benefits, and infrastructure maintenance has been compromised by a continuing pattern of decreasing aid from the State. Mandates from federal and state government often are not accompanied by sufficient funding to accomplish those mandates. Less and less of the money we pay to the State through a myriad of taxes comes back to us. We must resort to cuts in services, overrides and new local taxes to sustain the Town.

Our survival as a safe and desirable place to live, work and visit depends in ever-increasing measure on the priorities and practices established in Boston, many of which are a mystery to the average Harwich citizen. If our needs are to be effectively voiced, we must increase our collective understanding of and influence on the actions of higher government.

Harwich should elevate its influence by monitoring pending legislative activity, analyzing its future impact on Harwich and providing input to our elected state officials. For example, Channel 18, the internet, and robo-calls/robo-e-mail should be employed to make issue-by-issue information available. The Town also should gather local public opinion to help inform and track the voting of elected officials. The collective voice of the Town of Harwich, spoken through Town officials, carries far more weight than input from individuals.

Harwich can take these new and improved steps to inform the votes of its legislators and by doing so optimize our efforts to preserve our town. How the elected officials respond to the town’s needs, tracked and published, is a vital guide for us on election day.

OBJECTIVE 4.1 Develop effective means of communication to inform Harwich voters of local, county, state and federal activity and to convey local opinions and needs to legislators.

ACTION 4.1.1 Establish a subcommittee or task force to explore ways to improve communication and local influence.

Responsible Parties – Board of Selectmen, Planning Board

Timeline/Measures of Success – Establish in 2011.

5) *GROWTH MANAGEMENT LOCATIONS*

Harwich has much to protect – its natural environment, its village character, its scenic beauty and its varied population. As the community moves forward, it must balance protection of existing amenities with jobs, housing and other future needs. The task, frequently termed growth management, is one of the central components of the Local Comprehensive Plan.

Harwich's population and economic centers range from ocean-oriented Harwich Port to historic Harwich Center to the newer commercial center of East Harwich. Complete descriptions of the town's seven villages are available at the [Town of Harwich Website](#). Many town planning documents describe the varying character and unique amenities of each village.

Harwich's growth, in part, is village-based. A broad-based community planning effort is seeking to strengthen village qualities in East Harwich with compact, pedestrian-friendly, mixed-use development surrounded by lower density clustered residential development and open space. Recent planning efforts in Harwich Port seek to take full advantage of beach and harbor amenities and to provide stronger links between these amenities and the village center. Village planning in Harwich Center has focused more on cultural and historic strengths complemented by moderate commercial activity. The remaining four villages have less focused centers. West Harwich and South Harwich contain residential neighborhoods along with commercial establishments along the length of Route 28. North Harwich and Pleasant Lake are predominantly residential though the latter is bisected by Route 124, the main link from Route 6 to Brewster.

This section of the Local Comprehensive Plan focuses on the above villages and other locations throughout the town. Various growth management topics are addressed elsewhere.

A key component of growth management is housing policy – affordability, location, and variety of housing types and cost. These issues are addressed in Section 6, Growth Management Topics.

Harwich's growth depends on infrastructure, most notably wastewater treatment and disposal. The initial impetus for wastewater planning was water quality in Harwich estuaries. However, without adequate growth controls in place, construction of wastewater facilities also may enable new growth or shift growth patterns. The town's growth management task is to determine the type, extent and location of such growth. Good growth management also seeks to reduce the need for costly infrastructure. These issues are addressed in Section 6, Growth Management Topics.

Growth management also considers where growth should not occur. The town's open space resources – including bogs, beaches, ponds and woodlands – are extensive. Much of that land already is protected by conservation restrictions or other means. The town must consider the degree of protection for other publicly-owned open space and whether additional open space land should be acquired and protected. These issues are addressed in Section 3, Cultural, Recreational and Natural Assets.

Villages

GOAL: Enhance the role of villages as population and commercial centers.

East Harwich

East Harwich has seen rapid commercial development in the past two decades. The area is within the watershed of a nitrogen-sensitive embayment, Pleasant Bay, and is in close proximity to Hawksnest State Park. A significant planning effort began in East Harwich in 2005 and, to date, has produced reports on village planning and design principles, market assessment, traffic capacity, and zoning tools. The reports are being used to craft new zoning for the area that would promote a compact, pedestrian-friendly mixed-use village center while preserving surrounding open space. All reports are available in the [East Harwich](#) section of the Harwich web site.

- The [Village Initiative Report \(29m\)](#) established a series of guiding principles that would encourage walking in the village neighborhood, include open and green spaces in every definition of East Harwich, pull development into the village center instead of allowing it to sprawl into adjacent open space, not overburden existing infrastructure and the environment, and adopt design guidelines that define a local tradition.
- The first of three technical reports, the [East Harwich Village Center Retail Market Assessment](#) described a sizeable market area within 4 miles of East Harwich and found that current “leakage” to businesses outside the area could be recaptured.
- The second technical report, the [Traffic Analysis Comparison of Zoning Alternatives for East Harwich Village Center](#), analyzed the ability of the existing roadway system to support full build-out under proposed village zoning. The report recommended either signalized intersections or roundabouts in conjunction with long-term improvements to the Route 137 corridor between Route 6 and the Village Center District and a ring road configuration within the village.
- The third technical report, [A Zoning Framework for East Harwich Village Center](#), proposed a number of measures to improve village character and to implement the guiding principles first established for the area including: greater residential density with diverse types of housing, lower density residential areas around the village, mix of commercial and residential uses, reduced parking requirements due to increased pedestrian activity, and guidelines for site and building design.

The extensive preliminary planning work being done for East Harwich is now being coordinated with other planning efforts in the town. The proposed village character is being considered in the Public Works Department’s highway improvement project on Route 137. As a result, bike lanes and sidewalks will be included along the entire length of the project, and concrete sidewalks rather than asphalt will be built in the village area. Discussions have begun to connect the [Open Space and Recreation Plan](#) to East Harwich village plans. The zoning framework has been shared with the Planning Board in the context of overall land use needs for the town.

As this plan is being written, the Town has hired Cape Cod Commission staff to prepare the first draft of new zoning provisions and design guidelines for East Harwich. The Town also has hired a planning consultant to provide peer review services of the draft zoning. Initial oversight of the project is from the East Harwich Collaborative with representatives from the East Harwich Community Association, Harwich Planning Board and Planning Department, Cape Cod Commission and Association to Preserve Cape Cod. As zoning proposals become formalized, the role of the Planning Board will increase in approving a set of zoning amendments to be brought to Annual Town Meeting for voter approval.

The success of East Harwich planning will depend on continued involvement by landowners, developers and the general public. The plans and zoning amendments prepared by the town will provide an opportunity for a new village character to emerge in East Harwich. Others must be involved to complete the process.

OBJECTIVE 5.1 Encourage the emergence of a new village character in East Harwich.

ACTION 5.1.1 Propose new zoning provisions and design guidelines that are compatible with recent planning principles for East Harwich.

Responsible Parties – Planning Board, East Harwich Collaborative, Planning Staff, Cape Cod Commission staff, planning consultant.

Timeline/Measures of Success – The target for completion of the first draft is the first half of 2011. Documents will be reviewed by the Planning Board through 2011. When all revisions have been completed to the satisfaction of the Planning Board, it shall approve the proposed zoning revisions for inclusion on the warrant for Town Meeting. The current target is a public vote at a Special Town Meeting in fall 2011.

OBJECTIVE 5.2 Study options for adequate wastewater infrastructure that will accommodate growth in the East Harwich Village Center while protecting water quality in Pleasant Bay, the Six Ponds area, and town wells.

ACTION 5.2.1 Prepare build-out projections for East Harwich based on proposed zoning revisions. Submit projections to the Wastewater Management Subcommittee for inclusion in the town's wastewater planning.

Responsible Parties – Planning Staff

Timeline/Measures of Success – Submit in 2011.

ACTION 5.2.2 Near-term development in East Harwich may occur with the design of private, collected systems. Require any such systems to be designed for easy future connection to a larger public system.

Responsible Parties – Board of Health, Planning Board

Timeline/Measures of Success – as development occurs.

OBJECTIVE 5.3 Protect open space in the area surrounding East Harwich village.

ACTION 5.3.1 Propose new zoning provisions that direct most new growth in the East Harwich area to the village and that protect open space amenities in the surrounding area.

Responsible Parties – Planning Board, East Harwich Collaborative, Planning Staff, Cape Cod Commission staff, planning consultant.

Timeline/Measures of Success – Open space zoning should accompany village zoning and should follow the same timeline as Action 5.1.1.

ACTION 5.3.2 Prepare a plan depicting open land in and around Hawksnest State Park with trail connections to the village center. Consider this plan and any other open space plans in the area during review of subdivisions in East Harwich residential districts.

Responsible Parties – Planning Board, Conservation Commission, Trails Committee, Planning Staff, East Harwich Collaborative.

Timeline/Measures of Success – Prepare Hawksnest plan in 2011. Subdivision reviews will take place as development occurs.

OBJECTIVE 5.4 Provide adequate transportation infrastructure that is compatible with the proposed village character for East Harwich and will accommodate growth in the area.

ACTION 5.4.1 Bike lanes and sidewalks are currently being planned as part of the town's Route 137 project. As village-style development emerges, internal roads will connect quadrants; and their intersections with Routes 137 and 39 must be planned carefully. Internal road crossings of Routes 137 and 39 also should accommodate pedestrian/bike travel.

Responsible Parties – Public Works Department, Traffic Safety Committee, Bikeways Committee, Planning Staff.

Timeline/Measures of Success – Complete design of Route 137 project in 2011 and begin construction. Review planning for internal roads and intersections as development occurs.

OBJECTIVE 5.5 Link East Harwich zoning to other villages.

ACTION 5.5.1 Consider applicability of new zoning provisions and design guidelines to Harwich Port, Harwich Center and other villages.

Responsible Parties – Planning Board, Planning Staff

Timeline/Measures of Success – begin in 2012 after adoption of East Harwich zoning.

Harwich Port

Prior to the development of East Harwich, Harwich Port was the economic center of the town. Numerous residential neighborhoods were developed on or near Nantucket Sound, typically on lots much smaller than permitted by zoning today. The village's most important amenities, its beaches and harbors, remain as a strong attraction for residents, non-resident taxpayers, and visitors. The challenge facing Harwich Port is to protect its amenities and to revitalize its role as a village center.

While active village planning efforts have been underway in East Harwich in recent years, little has been done to change the status quo in Harwich Port. New efforts are needed to address a number of specific issues:

- Water quality in the harbors has deteriorated; steps are underway to improve wastewater treatment and reduce nitrogen loading
- Local regulations responding to wastewater treatment issues have limited the ability to operate and expand restaurants and other high water volume uses
- Wastewater treatment also is a concern in neighborhoods such as “the campgrounds” (described as Ocean Grove in the [Harwich Heritage Landscape Inventory report](#)) where densely-sited homes on older septic systems do not meet current standards
- Beach parking is limited in peak summer months, and beach access could be greatly improved by sidewalks along lower Bank Street, Earle Road and elsewhere; beach access also could be improved by establishing remote parking at schools and other locations along with shuttle connections
- Sidewalks and bike paths also are lacking along other important routes to Harwich Port including Route 28 from Wychmere and Saquatucket Harbors and Bank Street or Forest Street from Harwich Center and the rail trail
- The [Harbors & Marine Facilities Analysis Report](#) has identified piers, bulkheads and other harbor infrastructure in need of repair.

In June 2010, the Board of Selectmen appointed a Saquatucket and Wychmere Harbors Task Force to address issues and opportunities relating to the harbors, including possible acquisition of the Downey property adjacent to Saquatucket Harbor. Under the guidance of the Task Force, Cape Cod Commission staff produced a Saquatucket Harbor Concept Plan that recommended actions such as relocated access and circulation for boat trailers, expanded parking areas, sidewalk and bike route connections, redesign and reuse of docks and bulkheads, and economic development.

OBJECTIVE 5.6 Provide pedestrian and bicycle links to adjacent villages and amenities.

ACTION 5.6.1 Review the draft feasibility study prepared by Cape Cod Commission staff of routes from the rail trails to Route 28 with extensions to the beaches and harbors. Provide at least one direct route, suitable for pedestrian and bicycle travel, between Harwich Center and Harwich Port. Also study an extension of the rail trail, separate from vehicle routes and suitable for family bicycle travel.

Responsible Parties – Planning Staff, Cape Cod Commission Staff, Bikeways Committee, Trails Committee, Traffic and Safety Committee, Public Works Department, Recreation and Youth Department.

Timeline/Measures of Success – complete review of the feasibility study in early 2011 and establish route priorities and timelines.

ACTION 5.6.2 Pursue funding for construction of routes identified in the feasibility study. Potential funding sources include the Community Preservation Act, outside grants, bonding and budget overrides.

Responsible Parties – Planning Staff, Bikeways Committee, Community Preservation Committee, Public Works Department.

Timeline/Measures of Success – identify funding sources for one or more routes in 2011.

OBJECTIVE 5.7 Improve harbor facilities by maintaining and upgrading infrastructure and supporting boating and tourist activities.

ACTION 5.7.1 Establish timelines for follow-up on the 2010 harbors report prepared by Cape Cod Commission staff for the Saquatucket and Wychmere Harbors Task Force.

Responsible Parties – Board of Selectmen, Waterways Commission, Harbormaster, Planning Staff, Bikeways Committee.

Timeline/Measures of Success – Complete list of recommendations and timeline in 2011.

ACTION 5.7.2 Pursue acquisition of property adjacent to Saquatucket Harbor. Do public outreach explaining potential parking, building and conservation uses of the property as identified in the 2010 Saquatucket and Wychmere Harbors Task Force report.

Responsible Parties – Board of Selectmen, Town Administrator, Real Estate and Open Space Committee, Conservation Commission, Planning Staff.

Timeline/Measures of Success – prepare an article for acquisition of the Downey property for inclusion on the warrant for Town Meeting in May 2011.

OBJECTIVE 5.8 Analyze wastewater treatment options, including centralized sewer, that will enable appropriate levels of development in Harwich Port.

ACTION 5.8.1 Conduct a cost/benefit analysis of sewerage Harwich Port. Include build-out projections under existing and potential zoning as well as economic development findings from the harbor study. Incorporate results into the town's wastewater planning.

Responsible Parties – Planning Board, Water Quality Task Force

Timeline/Measures of Success – Begin study in 2011.

Harwich Center

Historic Harwich Center, with Brooks Academy and other major buildings constructed in the mid 19th century, is described on the [Town of Harwich website](#). Harwich Center serves as the focus of public activities in the town. Town Hall, Brooks Free Library, Brooks Park and the Old Colony bike trail are located directly in the village. Three public schools and the Community Center are nearby. Major commercial activity has relocated to year-round East Harwich and summer-oriented Harwich Port. However, restaurants and retail businesses remain; and their continued success should be encouraged.

Two planning studies in the past decade have identified opportunities and constraints for Harwich Center. A wide-ranging Final Report for the Harwich Center Initiative was prepared by the Cecil Group in February 2000. More recently, a [Harwich Center Technical Memorandum](#) prepared by Cape Cod Commission staff in 2009 offered recommendations for sidewalks and bikeways, parking, street circulation and wastewater treatment.

Articles for funding of Harwich Center projects were approved at 2009 and 2010 Annual Town Meetings. A baseline survey of the Harwich Historic District has been completed and will assist in planning for parking lots, wastewater treatment facilities, and transportation improvements that will enhance safe and efficient movement of vehicles and people. Also, funds are now available for transporting threatened historic buildings from their current location, if threatened by demolition, and relocating them on Town-owned land adjacent to Brooks Academy.

Economic development in Harwich Center should recognize two important characteristics – the historic character of the village and its proximity to the rail trail. The scale of additional development in the village should be modest and should build on these elements.

OBJECTIVE 5.9 Enhance Harwich Center’s role as the historic and governmental center of the town, including small-scale businesses.

ACTION 5.9.1 Using the baseline survey of the Historic District, pursue local parking, transportation and wastewater treatment options to assist local businesses.

Responsible Parties – Historic District Commission, Town Administrator, Engineering and Planning Staff.

Timeline/Measures of Success – Establish working group in 2011. Present recommendations in 2012.

ACTION 5.9.2 Explore transportation improvements, including traffic calming measures and re-designed or improved crosswalks, to enhance pedestrian safety.

Responsible Parties – Traffic Safety Committee, Historic District Commission, Engineering and Planning Staff.

Timeline/Measures of Success – Start in 2012

ACTION 5.9.3 Initiate planning and site preparation for the land adjacent to Brooks Academy. Determine historic buildings suitable for the site.

Responsible Parties – Historic District Commission, Engineering and Planning Staff.

Timeline/Measures of Success – Establish working group in 2011. Do on-going monitoring of historic sites and proposed building demolitions to identify buildings that may become available.

Outside Villages

GOAL: Accommodate commercial and industrial development that is appropriately sized and located.

Route 28

Planners generally favor village development over highway-oriented commercial strips. Villages do more to establish a “sense of place”. They facilitate pedestrian circulation between compatible uses and rely less on large parking lots. However, over the past 50 years, many commercial uses have been successful due to high traffic volumes, good visibility and easy access on major highways such as Route 28. Due to existing development patterns, commercial zoning on Route 28 should be continued so that current businesses may remain viable. However, future planning will encourage village locations as evidenced by the earlier discussion of Harwich Port.

5.10 Explore the viability of village centers along Route 28 outside of Harwich Port.

ACTION 5.10.1 Review potential boundaries of village districts in West Harwich, South Harwich and Saquatucket Harbor in connection with existing development patterns, economic development opportunities, and wastewater treatment costs. Include results in preparation of the Regional Vision Map for Harwich.

Responsible Parties – Planning Board

Timeline/Measures of Success – Begin work in 2011 with completion in 2012.

Commercial/Industrial Districts

Harwich's existing Commercial Zoning Districts are in Harwich Center, Harwich Port, East Harwich and along Route 28. The existing Industrial Zoning Districts are adjacent to Queen Anne Road, the intersection of Depot Street and Great Western Road, and the Route 6/Route 124 interchange. Modest expansion of commercial/industrial uses may take place in these districts, but there is limited space for larger uses.

Future commercial development should take place largely in the villages as noted in previous discussions. The greatest development potential is in East Harwich where a new village pattern has been proposed for a mix of commercial and residential uses. Previous sections also call for modest economic development appropriate to the character of the older villages of Harwich Center and Harwich Port. Also, as noted above, existing commercial activity along Route 28 should be allowed to continue though the focus for new development should be elsewhere. Smaller village centers may be considered for West Harwich, South Harwich and Saquatucket Harbor.

Queen Anne Road provides a home for many construction, supply, maintenance, and storage businesses. These and other research/development and industrial uses are welcome on remaining land in the industrial district. Due to limited available land, modest expansion of industrial districts may be considered in connection with wastewater planning and other infrastructure capacity.

OBJECTIVE 5.11 Direct retail development towards village centers at a size and scale appropriate to the character of those centers. Use the special permit process for review of any larger-scale development to ensure compatibility with the proposed character of the district.

OBJECTIVE 5.12 Encourage compatibility of commercial uses within mixed-use village districts via upgrade of landscaping requirements and standards for review of traffic, parking, noise and other impacts.

OBJECTIVE 5.13 Review modest expansion of industrial boundaries in connection with economic development opportunities, wastewater treatment costs and infrastructure capacity. Limit new contractor/storage and similar industrial buildings to industrial districts.

ACTIONS 5.11.1 through 5.13.1 Amend zoning standards as needed to accomplish commercial and industrial siting and design review objectives. Review modest expansion of district boundaries and include results in preparation of the Regional Vision Map for Harwich.

Responsible Parties – Planning Board

Timeline/Measures of Success – Start in 2011 with completion in 2012.

6) *GROWTH MANAGEMENT TOPICS*

Important topics directly related to growth management include housing, transportation, wastewater management, economic development, agriculture and energy.

Housing

The Commonwealth of Massachusetts has established a 10% housing affordability goal for each town. A Subsidized Housing Inventory (SHI) lists housing units that meet eligibility standards. Through May 2010, the Massachusetts Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) certified 292 total SHI units, or 4.98% of the town's total of 5,862 year-round housing units.

In accordance with Massachusetts guidelines, the town adopted a [Housing Production Plan](#) (HPP) in the fall of 2009 and Massachusetts DHCD subsequently approved it in January 2010. As stated in the summary, a major goal of the HPP is to eventually meet the state's 10% affordability goal. However, another important goal is to serve the range of local housing needs, even if a housing initiative does not result in additional SHI affordable units. Examples include promotion of "workforce housing" (defined as housing for those earning between 80% and 120% of area median income) and accessory apartments.

The Housing Production Plan offers a wide range of housing strategies. The HPP states, "It is important to note that these strategies are presented as a package for the Town to consider, prioritize, and process, each through the appropriate regulatory channels."

The Planning Board recognizes that a tremendous amount of effort goes into developing housing strategies and implementing affordable housing projects in Harwich. Participants include town entities – Harwich Housing Committee and Harwich Housing Authority – and non-profit providers – Harwich Ecumenical Council for the Homeless, Housing Assistance Corporation, Community Development Partnership, and Habitat for Humanity. The town provides financial support to these efforts through the Board of Selectmen, Community Preservation Committee, and Town Meeting. While housing opportunities will continue to arise in a number of different areas, the Planning Board recommends three initial priorities as part of the Local Comprehensive Plan.

- 1) Encourage re-use of existing housing stock rather than development on vacant land. In a weak housing market, more opportunities exist to buy or rent existing housing units at a reasonable price.
- 2) Encourage development of village housing rather than in outlying areas. If new housing units are created, it is preferred to locate those units in established villages. Techniques may include accessory apartments or higher density. Current limitations of wastewater treatment capacity may hinder new village development in the short term. However, if development is proposed for outlying areas, it should be directed away from sensitive resources.
- 3) Provide rental assistance rather than subsidized home ownership. A far greater number of residents may be assisted by vouchers and other rental assistance than by large

subsidies to individual homebuyers. Seasonal workers and year-round residents with modest incomes are common in Harwich and would benefit from rental assistance.

GOAL: Enable suitable housing opportunities for the Harwich population with emphasis on affordable and other low-cost housing.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

OBJECTIVE 6.1 Establish priorities for implementation of the 2010 Housing Production Plan for the Town of Harwich.

ACTION 6.1.1 Those responsible for housing policy shall establish an annual procedure for reviewing existing priorities and recommending new priorities. Priorities ultimately shall be the responsibility of the Board of Selectmen.

Responsible Parties – Housing Committee, Housing Authority, Board of Selectmen

Timeline/Measures of Success – Priorities shall be reviewed and approved annually in advance of applications for Community Preservation Act and other funding.

OBJECTIVE 6.2 Pursue implementation efforts for affordable housing projects consistent with town priorities.

ACTION 6.2.1 Identify projects, funding sources, and potential environmental and permitting issues.

Responsible Parties – Housing Committee, Housing Authority, Affordable Housing Consultant, Planning Department.

Timeline/Measures of Success – Projects shall be selected, reviewed and approved annually. Success will be measured by adoption of projects at Town Meeting.

ACTION 6.2.2 Encourage public and private provision of workforce housing (defined as housing for those earning between 80% and 120% of area median income) and other low-cost housing regardless of eligibility for the Subsidized Housing Inventory.

Responsible Parties – Housing Committee, Affordable Housing Consultant and others

Timeline/Measures of Success – Success will be measured by the approval, construction and occupancy of workforce and other low-cost housing.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT PATTERNS

OBJECTIVE 6.3 Pursue zoning and other development controls that support desirable housing development patterns.

ACTION 6.3.1 Encourage village housing through efforts such as a possible zoning revision in East Harwich from a Commercial Highway District to a Village Center District. Consider whether similar zoning revisions should be proposed in other Harwich villages.

Responsible Parties – Planning Board

Timeline/Measures of Success – Prepare East Harwich zoning revisions for proposed adoption at Town Meeting in May 2011. Prepare any additional zoning revisions for proposed adoption at Town Meeting in May 2012.

ACTION 6.3.2 Propose higher residential density in village districts to encourage affordable housing projects. Centralized wastewater treatment may be needed to accomplish higher density (Objective 6.5).

Responsible Parties – Planning Board, Water Quality Task Force

Timeline/Measures of Success – See Action 6.3.1 for a timetable for zoning revisions. A reasonable timeline for provision of centralized wastewater treatment has not yet been determined.

ACTION 6.3.3 Adopt stronger cluster development provisions for any development proposed in outlying areas.

Responsible Parties – Planning Board

Timeline/Measures of Success – Prepare East Harwich zoning revisions for proposed adoption at Town Meeting in May 2011. Prepare any additional zoning revisions for proposed adoption at Town Meeting in May 2012.

Transportation

GOAL: Maintain transportation infrastructure and provide improvements as needed for a variety of transportation modes.

Harwich has two interchanges on Route 6, Cape Cod's major east-west highway – Exit 10 leading to Harwich Center and Pleasant Bay and Exit 11 leading to East Harwich. Route 28, another heavily traveled east-west corridor serves businesses and other local uses in West Harwich, Harwich Port and South Harwich. Other major connecting highways in Harwich are Routes 124, 137 and 39.

These major highways are eligible for outside funding assistance. The Public Works Department works closely with the Cape Cod Metropolitan Planning Organization to plan major improvements. A recently completed project added a traffic signal and turning lanes at the

intersection of Queen Anne Road and Route 124, immediately adjacent to Exit 10. The project has resulted in significant reduction of backed-up traffic from Route 6. Design plans are nearing completion for upgrades to Route 137, including signalization of the Exit 11 interchange and new sidewalks and shoulders suitable for bicycle use along the entire length of the route in Harwich. The Public Works Department led an extensive public outreach process for the Route 137 project, including discussions with those involved in East Harwich village planning. Another project in the planning phase is an upgrade of Route 124 from Exit 10 to the Brewster town line.

The Planning Department is focusing greater attention on bicycle paths and sidewalks with the intention of enhancing Harwich's character as a bicycle and pedestrian-friendly community. The Cape Cod Commission was commissioned to do a study on safe and effective pedestrian and bicycle facilities between the rail trails and Route 28 with a specific focus on a connection between Harwich Center and Harwich Port. The January 2011 Plan for Improved Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities in Harwich included as its top two priorities a pedestrian link on Bank Street between Harwich Center and Harwich Port and sidewalks/bike path on Route 28 from Harwich Port to Saquatucket Harbor.

Appendix B of the [Open Space and Recreation Plan](#) lists priority sidewalk and bicycle facility improvements throughout Harwich. In addition to the Harwich Center/Harwich Port facilities described above, other important locations include additional sections along Route 28, connecting links to Red River Beach and several other beaches, and bike shoulders along major roadways such as Long Pond Drive. Harwich also participated in the recent Cape Cod National Seashore Bicycle Feasibility Study in an effort to link Harwich bicycle paths to the regional bike network.

Sufficient parking is needed to support a range of village and recreational uses. One strategy for improved beach and harbor access is to combine existing or new off-site parking lots with shuttle bus service. Bicycle planners have noted the need for more rail trail parking, particularly in busy summer months. The Bikeways Committee is now seeking construction of a short trail spur connecting the rail trail to parking lot 5 on the high school property. A recent survey of Harwich Center was done, in part, to identify locations within the village that could be developed for public parking.

OBJECTIVE 6.4 Provide bicycle, pedestrian and transit connections between villages, beaches, harbors and other destination points.

ACTION 6.4.1 Pursue funding sources including outside grants, Community Preservation Act, and Capital Outlay to design and fund bicycle and pedestrian priorities from the 2011 Plan for Improved Pedestrian and Bicycle Facilities in Harwich and from Appendix B of the Open Space and Recreation Plan.

Responsible Parties – Planning and Public Works Departments, Bikeways Committee, Recreation and Youth Committee

Timeline/Measures of Success – Include one or more projects in the FY2012 town budget.

ACTION 6.4.2 Explore opportunities for remote parking lots and shuttle bus service for harbors, beaches and other sites with high seasonal demand.

Responsible Parties – Planning Board, Chamber of Commerce

Timeline/Measures of Success – Begin planning work in 2011 or 2012.

Wastewater Management

The Massachusetts Estuaries Project has identified water-quality issues in many of the 89 estuaries in southeastern Massachusetts. Five of those estuaries – Herring River, Allen Harbor, Wychmere Harbor, Saquatucket Harbor and Pleasant Bay – are located in Harwich. The State provided policy and financial directives to address the water-quality issues, resulting in initiation of the Harwich Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan in 2007. The Town of Harwich created two bodies to manage the plan – (1) the Water Quality Task Force - Wastewater Management Subcommittee to oversee a consultant's work in developing the plan, and (2) a Citizens Advisory Committee to inform the Board of Selectmen and the public about wastewater issues.

The essential water quality issue is nutrient loading to the estuaries, resulting in a decline in estuarine health. This decline is caused primarily by nitrogen from surrounding watersheds, with septic systems being the most prevalent nitrogen contributor. Over-fertilization from nitrogen results in plankton blooms, loss of eelgrass beds, decline in fish and shellfish populations, low oxygen in bay waters leading to fish kills and possible odor, and algae accumulations.

Nitrogen management focuses on control of watershed nitrogen inputs and maximizing tidal flushing. The plan is to develop nitrogen thresholds and target loads for the embayments. Initial findings of the Massachusetts Estuaries Project are that Pleasant Bay and Harwich's three harbors have poor water quality while Herring River has moderate to high water quality. These early results show a need for nitrogen removal in four of the five estuaries/watersheds.

Key existing conditions reviewed include drinking water supplies, pond water quality, on-site system performance, package treatment systems, town open space, wetlands, zoning map, areas to be developed, and development pattern from 1951 to 1999. Notably, drinking water quality was found to be very high and, by itself, would not be a factor in requiring construction of sewers. In contrast, neighborhoods around some ponds, e.g. Great Sand Lakes, may need sewers to address phosphorous loading to those ponds.

Phase 1 of the Comprehensive Wastewater Management Plan is underway. Major tasks include:

- Evaluation by UMass at Dartmouth School of Marine Science and Technology of water quality in Harwich estuaries/watersheds (currently studies have been completed for 4 of 5 watersheds)
- Review by project consultant Camp Dresser & McKee of potential sites for wastewater treatment/recharge (currently primary and secondary sites have been identified and a public information session is being advertised)

- Potential for regional options such as sharing of wastewater treatment facilities with Chatham or joining with the towns of Brewster, Orleans and Eastham in reviewing a potential treatment site in Brewster
- Evaluation of other measures to address excessive nitrogen loading in critical waters, such as siting of a hydrologically efficient culvert under Route 28 to increase tidal exchange between Muddy Creek and Pleasant Bay (currently a grant has been obtained and a consultant is being selected to prepare an initial design of a culvert system)
- Review of alternative treatment systems and use of natural attenuation in place of structural systems (currently the Bank Street bogs have been identified as a likely location for construction of ponds to provide natural attenuation, however funds for further evaluation have not been obtained yet).

The goal of the initial phase of the study is to identify all of the options available to the town. The next phase will be to reduce those options to two to four possible scenarios. With a large land area and varying water quality issues throughout the town, the most likely scenarios include a quilt work of on-site and off-site treatment facilities and natural attenuation.

Wastewater planning in Harwich will continue to proceed methodically over a multi-year period. The timetable for eventual construction of facilities cannot yet be predicted. Considerable public input is anticipated at each major stage of the process.

GOAL: Protect water quality in Harwich. Provide opportunities for appropriate development.

OBJECTIVE 6.5 Prepare a wastewater management plan that satisfies the town's water protection and development goals.

ACTION 6.5.1 Select a proposed management plan that is technically sound, cost effective and successful in addressing water quality issues.

Responsible Parties – Water Quality Task Force

Timeline/Measures of Success - Completion of a management plan for presentation to the Board of Selectmen and to the public. A reasonable timeline has not yet been determined.

ACTION 6.5.2 Ensure that the plan supports the future growth needs of the town, with sewers considered in village centers such as East Harwich and Harwich Port.

Responsible Parties – Planning Board, Water Quality Task Force

Timeline/Measures of Success – Inclusion of growth goals in the final management plan.

ACTION 6.5.3 Anticipate public concerns and ensure that information is provided to address those concerns. Establish lines of communication with the legislative body and the general public.

Responsible Parties – Citizens Advisory Committee, Board of Selectmen

Timeline/Measures of Success – Public acceptance of a management plan.

Economic Development

The 2000 Local Comprehensive Plan concentrated on actions to protect the Cape from possible negative consequences of rapid growth. However, population has declined in the past decade both in Harwich and Barnstable County. The focus of the current plan should turn to economic development.

Economic development should build on the existing community base. As described in Section 1, Harwich's character is both that of a seasonal community and an aging community. In addition to tourist-influenced jobs in retail stores and restaurants, the large number of second homes in Harwich creates jobs in landscaping, building maintenance and renovation, and garden and building supply. The aging population is supported by extensive medical services.

Due to the seasonal nature of our tourist-based economy, Harwich faces significant job fluctuations throughout the year. Total employment in July is more than 25% higher than in January. The July unemployment rate is 25% lower than the average Massachusetts rate, but it jumps to 50% higher in January.

The community should support service and construction industry jobs such as those above, but economic development efforts should promote higher-paying year-round jobs such as those in technology. Harwich benefits from the two Back Office buildings on Route 28 and should seek to attract similar businesses.

There are economic development roles in Harwich for various parties including the Harwich Chamber of Commerce, the Real Estate and Open Space Committee, and policy-making boards and departments within town government.

The Economic Development Committee of the Harwich Chamber of Commerce has identified a number of infrastructure items critical to economic success. Many of these items are discussed elsewhere in the Local Comprehensive Plan:

- Education (Section 2) – create and operate new regional school system
- Zoning (Section 5) – establish appropriate zoning standards to accommodate development in commercial and industrial districts.
- Housing (Section 6) – in addition to “affordable” housing, encourage workforce housing (for those earning between 80% and 120% of area median income)
- Wastewater (Section 6) – study possible sewer construction in village centers such as East Harwich and Harwich Port

- Technology infrastructure (Section 7) – work regionally with Open Cape to build fiber optic and wireless microwave networks and locally construct lateral connections to the network

Two additional Chamber of Commerce goals are “branding”, creating a stronger image for the town, and “wayfinding”, providing signage in town and on Route 6 directing people to Harwich destinations.

Traditionally, the Real Estate and Open Space Committee has focused on acquisition of open space land. In support of economic development, some of the committee’s efforts should now focus on acquisition of real estate that complements town economic development policy, such as acquisition of the Downey property adjacent to Saquatucket Harbor.

The Board of Selectmen, Planning Board and other policy-making boards are responsible for establishing economic development policy for the town. All town departments should be advised of and respond to such policy. For example, the planning department may seek zoning changes to modify development requirements within existing commercial/industrial districts or may propose expansion of those districts. Regulatory departments, though bound by specific regulations, should work with applicants in pursuit of economic development objectives. Regulators should encourage those projects that appear feasible and give clear advice regarding obstacles. All departments seeking grants should ensure that such action is consistent with economic development policy.

Economic development activities should build on the town’s strengths. The town’s three harbors support boating activities from ferries to fishing. The importance of the fishing and shell-fishing industries should continue to be recognized as the town evaluates its harbor infrastructure. Further harbor studies should measure a wide variety of economic benefits relating to direct harbor uses (e.g. tours and recreational boating), adjacent uses (e.g. restaurants, shops and artist shacks) and support of tourism throughout the area.

Recreation facilities from bike paths to golf courses to beaches draw many local residents and visitors. The uncrowded nature of the town and its ocean-influenced climate create a desirable living environment. The addition of a strong technology infrastructure will allow people to conduct nation-wide or world-wide business activities while located in an attractive community.

GOAL: Creation of good-quality jobs, housing and quality of life in Harwich.

Objective 6.6 Encourage economic development actions that build on the town’s existing character and strengths.

Action 6.6.1 Pursue a range of direct and spin-off activities relating to beaches, harbors and the rail trail.

Responsible Parties – Board of Selectmen, Chamber of Commerce, Planning Board, Recreation and Youth Commission, Waterways Commission, Bikeways Committee

Timeline/Measures of Success – Throughout 2011 and 2012.

Action 6.6.2 Encourage currently active job sectors, such as construction and service, but explore ways to reduce seasonal unemployment

Responsible Parties – Chamber of Commerce

Timeline/Measures of Success – Throughout 2011 and 2012 and beyond.

ACTION 6.6.3 Appoint an ad-hoc committee to pursue economic development that takes advantage of Open Cape infrastructure. Pursue cost-effective means to construct lateral connections along major Harwich roads.

Responsible Parties – Board of Selectmen, Chamber of Commerce, Public Works Department

Timeline/Measures of Success – Appoint committee in 2011. Provide report to Board of Selectmen in 2012.

Action 6.6.4 Encourage strong Town facilities and services by pursuing actions identified elsewhere in the Local Comprehensive Plan for housing, education, technology infrastructure, and wastewater.

Objective 6.7 Create a stronger image and identity for the town.

Action 6.7.1 Pursue “branding” and provide “wayfinding” signage.

Responsible Parties – Chamber of Commerce in partnership with Board of Selectmen

Timeline/Measures of Success – Complete design in 2011; seek funding and construction in 2012.

ACTION 6.7.2 Prepare a consistent and unified package of bicycle and pedestrian maps and signage for use by local residents and visitors.

Responsible Parties – Planning and Public Works Departments, Bikeways Committee, Chamber of Commerce, Harwich Conservation Trust

Timeline/Measures of Success – Identify sufficient connecting routes, ensure adequate safety, print maps and install signage by the end of 2011.

Agriculture

Commercial agriculture in Harwich centers on cranberry growing. The history of cranberry growing in Harwich and environmental challenges it faces today are described in the [Open Space and Recreation Plan](#):

“Cranberry bogs are necessary components of the cranberry industry in Harwich and in Southeastern Massachusetts as a whole. In Town, they were and remain an important part of the local economy. They are also a primary determinant of the character of several areas of the Town and are of great interest to visitors. Environmentally, they provide habitat to certain turtle and salamander species and offer food for wildlife. Negative groundwater impacts may result from cranberry farming which involves the application of certain pesticides, fungicides and fertilizers. Many of these contaminants, when applied properly, are designed to break down into harmless substances before mingling with the underlying or down stream groundwater. However, mechanical and/or human error can result in the release of hazardous substances into the groundwater. Organic farming methods, which use no synthetic fertilizers, are beginning to be popular. “

Agriculture on a small scale is thriving in Harwich. In 2010, a successful farmers market was operated on Parallel Street in front of the Brooks Academy Museum. A wide variety of locally-grown produce and other locally-made products were available for sale. Continuation of the farmers market into 2011 and beyond is strongly encouraged. With its continued success, related issues such as parking and pedestrian access must be addressed.

The Conservation Commission owns and operates community gardens on Sisson Road. A small portion of this 30 acre parcel supports garden efforts on 100 individual plots. Demand for plots has increased in recent years, and the Conservation Commission is considering expansion of the area used for gardening.

Energy

Energy production at the local level has concentrated on solar and wind power. The Town took several forward steps related to application of solar energy for municipal use within the past year. A 103KW, Photovoltaic array was installed and placed in operation on the elementary school in conjunction with the Cape and Vineyard Electric Cooperative. Savings of \$7000 per year have been projected. By the end of November 2010, more than 10,000 KWH have been produced at this site.

As of this writing, Town Meeting has authorized the Board of Selectmen to negotiate with and develop contracts to install a utility sized photovoltaic array over the capped landfill. It is projected that 17 acres of solar panels will be installed, producing 80% of the energy that is required by the town municipal accounts.

Recent efforts to site wind turbines in Harwich have been problematic. Due to the proximity of Chatham Airport, Federal Aviation Agency restrictions have limited available sites in town. A promising site was identified in North Harwich on town-owned land. However, a proposal to site to install two 1.5 MW wind turbines was rejected at 2010 Town Meeting due to neighborhood concerns about noise, flicker and other environmental impacts. The Utility and Energy Conservation Commission recommends that wind energy should continue to be explored in Harwich including smaller turbines (probably not exceeding 200 KW) at suitable locations.

In the area of energy conservation, the Cape Light Compact has conducted a very successful program to date with individual homeowners, low income owners, commercial and municipal accounts all receiving benefits. Continuing to gain in these areas requires significant effort to communicate with the ratepayers who would benefit from ever increasing availability of new efficiency measures.

GOAL: Reduce energy dependency.

Objective 6.8 Encourage local solar or wind energy production.

Action 6.8.1 Work with Cape and Vineyard Electric Cooperative to install a solar power plant on the capped town landfill.

Responsible Parties – Board of Selectmen, Utility and Energy Conservation Commission

Timeline/Measures of Success – Completion in 2012

7) *COMMUNICATION/TECHNOLOGY*

GOAL: Establish strong communication within Harwich government along with positive outreach to the community.

Communication is a theme that runs throughout this plan. As a first step, it involves internal coordination. Examples of actions that will require internal coordination include:

- A coordinated effort by the School Department, Recreation and Youth Commission, Youth Services Committee, and Community Center Staff to jointly prepare a plan for youth activities, facilities and staffing (Action 2.4.1);
- A combined effort by the Conservation Commission, Real Estate and Open Space Committee, Trails Committee, Planning Board and Board of Selectmen to establish priorities for new open space acquisitions (Action 3.4.1); and
- Work by the Board of Selectmen, Waterways Commission, Harbormaster and Planning Staff to identify specific timelines for recommendations from the 2010 Saquatucket and Wychmere Harbors Task Force (Action 5.7.1).

Communication also involves outreach to the public. The extensive East Harwich planning process described in Section 5 included a series of public forums in which plans were presented and citizens were asked to express preferences. A very successful recent example is the work done by the Chatham-Harwich Regional School District Planning Board. A combination of diligent research, clear presentation of issues, and a variety of opportunities for public interaction resulted in approval of a major new direction in the provision of educational services.

As the Town moves forward on a variety of issues, it must continue positive efforts towards public outreach. Some issues will require a concentrated effort in targeted locations, such as the review and update of historic district boundaries (Action 3.1.1). Other issues will require a thorough town-wide effort, such as the process envisioned for informing the public about a wastewater management plan (Action 6.5.3).

Technology is well-suited to support communication and outreach efforts. Channel 18 serves as a valuable tool for airing public meetings, discussion forums, and schedules of upcoming events. The [Town of Harwich website](#) is available for a more thorough description of Town boards/committees, departments and current events. Further improvements to the website will ensure that diverse users such as seasonal home-owners, residents with disabilities, and permit applicants are well-served.

Objective 7.1 Maintain and improve a Town website that is well-organized, accessible to a variety of users, and current.

Action 7.1.1 Employ a webmaster to make organizational and accessibility improvements to the website and to maintain it regularly. The webmaster's responsibility will include communication with all departments and boards/committees to ensure that information is detailed and current.

Responsible Parties – Town Administration, Board of Selectmen

Timeline/Measures of Success – Establish in 2011

Further communication improvements, supported by technology, also may be explored. The Intergovernmental Relations section recommended exploration of effective means to inform Harwich voters and to convey local opinions to legislators (Objective 4.1). Another potential issue to be explored is the inability of persons with physical or mental disabilities, including mobility, sight, hearing and cognitive impairment, to participate at Town Meeting. Various television, computer, telephone and other technological options may be employed to modify the meeting format.

Technological improvements also will serve the community as a whole. A major venture, currently in the planning stages, is the Open Cape Telecommunication Infrastructure project. Open Cape was awarded a \$32 Million Broadband Technology Opportunity Program grant by the [National Telecommunications and Information Administration](#) in March 2010, \$8 million from the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, funding from Barnstable County, and \$2 million in private funding from RCN Metro Optical Networks. The funding will allow OpenCape to build an open access network to support the economic, educational, public safety, and governmental needs of Cape Cod and the southeast Massachusetts region. The project will include a 350 mile fiber optic network, wireless microwave network, and regional data center to be built over the next 3 years. The network will serve approximately 321,204 households, 515,648 individuals, and 62,129 businesses, and will connect more than 70 community anchor institutions to the network as part of its initial build-out, including 12 emergency shelters located in schools, 30 libraries, five colleges, 6 academic research facilities, and 18 town or public safety buildings. Current Open Cape plans depict a fiber optic circuit running along the entire length of Route 28 in Harwich. Additional lateral connections will connect to that circuit.

8) IMPLEMENTATION

This plan includes numerous goal statements supported by objectives and actions. The actions are summarized in this section in three categories – top priority, short-term – 2011/2012, and longer term/ongoing. Responsible parties are listed for all actions. The Planning Board will review the status of these actions in its annual update of the Local Comprehensive Plan.

Top Priority

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY ¹
Section 2 (box)	Determine wastewater treatment options and associated costs to aid in growth management decisions	WQ, BoS, PB
2.5.1	Prepare a plan of activities, facilities, staffing and funding sources for youth services	School, Rec, Youth, CC, Lib
5.1.1	Propose new zoning provisions/design guidelines for E. Harwich	PB, EH, CCC
5.3.1	Propose new zoning provisions that direct growth to the E. Harwich village and protect open space in the surrounding area	PB, EH, CCC
5.6.1	Provide at least one direct route, suitable for pedestrian and bicycle travel, between Harwich Center and Harwich Port; also study an extension of the rail trail, separate from vehicle routes	Plan, CCC, Bike, Trail, Traffic, PW, Rec
5.7.2	Pursue acquisition of the Downey property adjacent to Saquatucket Harbor	BoS, TA, RE, ConsCom, Plan
5.8.1	Conduct a cost/benefit analysis of sewerage Harwich Port; include build-out projections and harbor economic development findings	PB, WQ
6.6.1	For economic development, pursue a range of direct and spin-off activities relating to beaches, harbors and the rail trail	BoS, Chamber, PB, Rec, Water, Bike
7.1.1	Employ a webmaster to make organizational and accessibility improvements to the website and to maintain it regularly	TA, BoS

Short Term - 2011/2012

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY ¹
2.4.1	Appoint a committee to study opportunities for reuse of the middle school building	BoS, School
2.6.1	Establish a subcommittee to review facility needs, costs, and funding sources for senior activities; include a swimming pool.	CC, CoA, Friends of CoA, School
3.1.1	Review parcels to be added to the historic district	Historic, BoS
3.2.1	Update the list of historically significant buildings	Historic
3.3.1	Complete and adopt the 5-year Recreation Plan and ensure compatibility with the Open Space and Recreation Plan	Rec, ConsCom
3.4.1	Identify priority land management areas and prepare land management plans	ConsCom, Trails
4.1.1	Establish a subcommittee to improve local influence and communication with legislators	BoS, PB
5.2.1	Submit E. Harwich build-out projections for inclusion in the town's	Plan

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY ¹
	wastewater planning	
5.3.2	Prepare a plan depicting open land in and around Hawksnest State Park with trail connections to the village center	PB, ConsCom, Trails, Plan, EH
5.5.1	Consider applicability of new zoning provisions and design guidelines to Harwich Port, Harwich Center and other villages	PB, Plan
5.6.2	Pursue funding of routes from item 5.6.1	Plan, Bike, CPC, PW
5.7.1	Establish timelines for follow-up on the 2010 harbors report prepared by Cape Cod Commission staff	BoS, Water, Plan, Harbor, Bike
5.9.1	Pursue local parking, transportation and wastewater treatment options to assist local businesses in Harwich Center	Historic, TA, Eng, Plan
5.9.3	Initiate planning and site preparation for the land adjacent to Brooks Academy; determine suitable historic buildings	Historic, Eng, Plan
5.10.1	Review potential boundaries of village districts in West Harwich, South Harwich and Saquatucket Harbor	PB
5.11.1 to 5.13.1	Amend zoning standards as needed to accomplish commercial and industrial siting and design review objectives	PB
6.3.1	Encourage village housing through E. Harwich zoning revisions	PB
6.3.3	Adopt stronger cluster development provisions for any development proposed in outlying areas	PB
6.4.1	Pursue funding sources to design and fund bicycle and pedestrian priorities from previous plans	PW, Plan, Bike, Rec
6.4.2	Explore opportunities for remote parking lots and shuttle bus service for harbors, beaches and other seasonal sites	PB, Chamber
6.6.3	Appoint an ad-hoc committee to pursue economic development that takes advantage of Open Cape infrastructure	BoS, Chamber, PW
6.7.1	Pursue “branding” and provide “wayfinding” signage	BoS, Chamber
6.7.2	Prepare a package of bicycle and pedestrian maps and signage for use by local residents and visitors	Plan, PW, Bike, Chamber, HCT
6.8.1	Work with Cape and Vineyard Electric Cooperative to install a solar power plant on the capped town landfill	BoS, Utility

Longer Term/Ongoing

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY ¹
2.1.1	Determine baseline services for all municipal departments and prepare annual budgets	TA, Depts
2.1.2	Explore options for delivering services more efficiently	TA, Depts, Others
2.2.1	Prioritize new facilities and services, seek use of revenues not related to property taxes, and consider overrides or exclusions	BoS, FinCom, K Outlay, PB
2.3.1	Monitor the type and frequency of emergency medical calls and other public safety services; provide regular reports	PD, FD, TA, BoS
2.7.1	Continue and expand efforts to provide meals, nursing care and other senior services	CoA

ACTION	DESCRIPTION	RESPONSIBLE PARTY ¹
3.5.1	Establish priorities for new open space acquisitions; determine funding sources, impact on taxes, and other means of protection	BoS,PB,CPC,Plan, ConsCom,Trail,RE
5.2.2	Require new private wastewater treatment systems to be designed for easy future connection to a larger public system	BoH, PB
5.4.1	Plan carefully for intersections of new village roads with Routes 137 and 39; accommodate pedestrian/bike travel	PW, Traffic, Bike, Plan
5.9.2	Explore improvements, including traffic calming measures and re-designed or improved crosswalks, to enhance pedestrian safety	Traffic, Historic, Eng, Plan
6.1.1	Establish an annual procedure for reviewing existing affordable housing priorities and recommending new priorities.	HousC, HousA, BoS
6.2.1	Identify affordable housing projects, funding sources, and potential environmental and permitting issues	HousC, HousA, Plan
6.2.2	Encourage public and private provision of workforce housing and other low-cost housing regardless of SHI eligibility	HousC, Others
6.3.2	Propose higher residential density in village districts to encourage affordable housing projects	PB, WQ
6.5.1	Select a wastewater management plan that is technically sound, cost effective and successful in addressing water quality issues	WQ
6.5.2	Ensure that the wastewater plan supports the future growth needs of the town, with sewers available for village centers	PB, WQ
6.5.3	Anticipate public concerns and ensure that information is provided to address those concerns	Citizens Advisory, BoS
6.6.2	Encourage currently active job sectors, such as construction and service, but explore ways to reduce seasonal unemployment	Chamber

1) Responsible parties (abbreviated names):

Bike	Bikeways Committee	HousC	Housing Committee
BoH	Board of Health	K Outlay	Capital Outlay Committee
BoS	Board of Selectmen	Lib	Brooks Free Library Board
Chamber	Chamber of Commerce	PB	Planning Board
CC	Community Center	PD	Police Department
CCC	Cape Cod Commission Staff	Plan	Planning Department
CPC	Community Preserv. Comm.	PW	Public Works Department
CoA	Council on Aging	RE	Real Estate and Open Space
ConsCom	Conservation Commission	Rec	Recreation and Youth Comm.
Depts	Departments	School	School Department
EH	East Harwich Collaborative	TA	Town Administrator
Eng	Engineering Department	Traffic	Traffic Safety Committee
FD	Fire Department	Trails	Trails Committee
FinCom	Finance Committee	Utility	Utility & Energy Committee
Harbor	Harbormaster	Water	Waterways Commission
HCT	Harwich Conservation Trust	WQ	Water Quality Task Force
Historic	Historic District Comm.	Youth	Youth Services Committee
HousA	Housing Authority		

Appendix A – HYPERLINKS *

Page	Hyperlink Name	Hyperlink Source
4	Council on Aging Strategic Plan, 2009-2019	
8	FY2012-2018 Capital Plan	
10	Chatham-Harwich Regionalization website	http://www.chathamharwich.org/RC_Main.aspx
13	Public Works Department	http://www.harwichhighway.com/
13	Five Year Road Maintenance Plan	
13	Recreation and Youth Department	http://www.harwichrecreation.com/
13	2010 Open Space and Recreation Plan	http://harwichma.virtualltownhall.net/Public_Documents/HarwichMA_Planning/Planning%20Projects/2010%20Final%20Open%20Space%20and%20Recreation%20Plan%20/
13	Harbormaster/Natural Resources Department	http://www.threeharbors.com/
13	dredging and beach nourishment	http://harwichma.virtualltownhall.net/Public_Documents/HarwichMA_Harbor/Beach%20Nourishment%20Plan.pdf
13	waterfront engineering study	
13	Cranberry Valley Golf Course	http://www.cranberrygolfcourse.com/
13	August 2009 10-Year Cranberry Valley Capital Plan	
13	Harwich Community Center	http://www.harwichcommunitycenter.org/
13	Brooks Free Library	http://www.brooksfreelibrary.org/
13	Water Department	http://www.harwichwater.com/
14	Town of Harwich Website	http://harwichma.virtualltownhall.net/Public_Documents/HarwichMA_WebDocs/about/center
14	The Harwich Historical Society	http://www.harwichhistoricalsociety.org/
14	Harwich Heritage Landscape Report	
15	Harwich Recreation and Youth Website	http://www.harwichrecreation.com/
15	2010 Open Space and Recreation Plan	http://harwichma.virtualltownhall.net/Public_Documents/HarwichMA_Planning/Planning%20Projects/2010%20Final%20Open%20Space%20and%20Recreation%20Plan%20/
16	2010 Open Space and Recreation Plan	http://harwichma.virtualltownhall.net/Public_Documents/HarwichMA_Planning/Planning%20Projects/2010%20Final%20Open%20Space%20and%20Recreation%20Plan%20/

Page	Hyperlink Name	Hyperlink Source
17	Harwich Water Department Website	http://www.harwichwater.com/quality/index.html
17	Pleasant Bay Resource Management Alliance	http://www.pleasantbay.org/
19	Town of Harwich Website	http://harwichma.virtualltownhall.net/Public_Documents/HarwichMA_WebDocs/about/about
20	East Harwich	HarwichMA_Planning/EastHarwichInitiative http://harwichma.virtualltownhall.net/Public_Documents/
20	Village Initiative Report (29m)	
20	East Harwich Village Center Retail Market Assessment	http://harwichma.virtualltownhall.net/Public_Documents/HarwichMA_Planning/Summary-Market%20Study%20Part%204.pdf
20	Traffic Analysis Comparison of Zoning Alternatives for East Harwich Village Center	http://harwichma.virtualltownhall.net/Public_Documents/HarwichMA_Planning/Technical%20Memo%20(Traffic)%20091228.pdf
20	A Zoning Framework for East Harwich Village Center	http://harwichma.virtualltownhall.net/Public_Documents/HarwichMA_Planning/East_Harwich_Zoning_11-24-09_Final.pdf
20	Open Space and Recreation Plan	http://harwichma.virtualltownhall.net/Public_Documents/HarwichMA_Planning/Planning%20Projects/2010%20Final%20Open%20Space%20and%20Recreation%20Plan%20/
23	Harwich Heritage Landscape inventory report	
23	Harbors & Marine Facilities Analysis Report	
25	Town of Harwich website	
25	Harwich Center Technical Memorandum	
28	Housing Production Plan	
31	Open Space and Recreation Plan	http://harwichma.virtualltownhall.net/Public_Documents/HarwichMA_Planning/Planning%20Projects/2010%20Final%20Open%20Space%20and%20Recreation%20Plan%20/
37	Open Space and Recreation Plan	http://harwichma.virtualltownhall.net/Public_Documents/HarwichMA_Planning/Planning%20Projects/2010%20Final%20Open%20Space%20and%20Recreation%20Plan%20/
39	Town of Harwich website	http://harwichma.virtualltownhall.net/Public_Documents/index
40	National Telecommunications and Information Administration	http://www.ntia.doc.gov/

* NOTE: Some hyperlinks have not yet been put on the internet.

Appendix B - DESCRIPTION OF THE PLANNING PROCESS

The Local Comprehensive Plan for Harwich was last adopted in May 2000. Efforts to update the plan began in 2005 and 2008 but were not completed. The current planning process began in May 2009 with hiring of a new Town Planner.

At the outset, the Planning Board made clear its intention to create a focused plan that would omit long descriptions and would detail specific actions to be pursued over the next five years. This plan is entirely new, and it should not be considered as an update of the 2000 Local Comprehensive Plan.

The Planning Board's first action was creation of a vision statement in July 2009. As preparation of the plan proceeded, the vision statement figured prominently in its organization.

In August 2009, the Planning Department sent input request letters to 22 departments and 47 boards and committees. A public kick-off meeting also was held in August. Based on input from these sources, follow-up meetings were scheduled on specific topics of interest:

- September 29, 2009 - bikeways, trails and sidewalks
- October 14, 2009 – housing policy
- November 24, 2009 - wastewater quality management plan and Harwich Port
- December 9, 2009 – open space acquisition, use and management
- February 23, 2010 – youth services with representatives from the school department, youth services, recreation, and the community center

An initial draft of specific sections was presented in February 2010 and reviewed by the Planning Board in small work sessions over the next several months. The Town Planner completed an “80% draft” in August 2010 and distributed it to the Planning Board, Board of Selectmen and Cape Cod Commission for comment. Additional work sessions were held through the fall culminating in completion of a “100%” draft in December 2010.

The December 14, 2010 draft was distributed to the same departments, boards and committees that were contacted during the kick-off stage of the plan. The draft also was posted on the Harwich website to allow public review and comment. Public input was further solicited at a Planning Board public meeting held on January 25, 2011. By the end of January, the Planning Department had accumulated 15 typed pages of comments received via telephone, e-mail and public meeting testimony. The Town Planner then inserted all comments in an annotated draft to facilitate review by the Planning Board. The annotated draft also was posted on the website.

An updated April 5, 2011 draft was presented to the Planning Board for final review prior to Town Meeting. With full opportunity having been provided for local review, this draft was circulated beyond town boundaries. The draft plan was e-mailed to the abutting towns of Chatham, Dennis, Brewster and Orleans to ensure compatibility with the plans of those towns. It was also forwarded to the Cape Cod Commission to seek certification of the plan. Following a public hearing on April 26, 2011, the Planning Board presented the plan for approval at the May 2011 Special Town Meeting.

Appendix C – REVIEW COMMENTS BY OTHERS

As described in Appendix B, adoption of the 2011 Local Comprehensive Plan included an extended public review process. Not all comments were included in the final plan. Some important comments that reflect alternate viewpoints are included in this appendix.

ACQUISITION OF OPEN SPACE

Harwich Real Estate and Open Space Committee: While we support and agree with the LCP's goal of providing better management of existing town lands, we want to stress that it is still important to continue to identify and acquire unprotected lands for the future. Consistent with Goals III and IV of the Open Space and Recreation Plan, our Committee has long recognized the importance of acquiring open space for water quality protection, wildlife habitat protection and recreation opportunities. While much has been accomplished since the creation of the Cape Cod Land Bank and the Community Preservation Act, the network of protected open space in Harwich is not complete. There are still unprotected parcels in key locations that are needed to ensure that our public drinking water quality is protected, that our ponds and embayments are healthy, that key wildlife habitat areas are preserved, and that our recreational trail network is viable.

We strongly support the LCP's effort to direct growth to village growth centers and protect surrounding open space. Open space zoning is critical to making village zoning work. However, we do not agree with the statement that "the town should consider . . . whether additional open space land should be acquired and protected". The question is not "whether" but rather "which" lands are most important to protect in the future. Open space is a critical component of a healthy environment and community and we will continue to work to protect it.

Harwich Conservation Trust: The Board of Trustees understands the current fiscal climate, which puts pressure on town, state and federal governments as well as nonprofits.

It is important to explore different approaches to acquiring open space, including zoning reform, transfer of development rights, and conservation easements. In addition, the town is interested in pursuing tax title property acquisitions and acquisition of owners-unknown properties as evidenced by Article 9 of the May 2011 Special Town Meeting.

However, these various initiatives take time, sometimes several years to produce results, and at this point, the results and the timeframe to achieve them are undetermined. Therefore, it is critical to pursue land purchases now and in the future to protect the public drinking water supply, recharge areas to nitrogen-sensitive embayments, coastal resources, ponds, wildlife habitat, walking trails and other environmental values.

The Town's Community Preservation Act fund is a readily available source of revenue specifically designated for open space, affordable housing, historic preservation and recreation purposes. Use of CPA funds does not impact other town-funded services. Cost of community services studies show that land preserved as open space costs towns less long-term than developed lands in terms of reducing the need for municipal services that can drive property tax increases. Preserving land also reduces the need

and expense of wastewater infrastructure. Therefore, the continued use of CPA funds for open space purchases makes financial sense.

Timing is critical for many land acquisition projects. For example, Harwich Conservation Trust is always working on multiple projects at any point in time with varying timelines and circumstances that influence completion. Having the town available as a ready and willing partner while leveraging state and federal funds where possible is very important and makes fiscal sense. For example, when the purchase of approx. 38.7 acres adjacent to Town Forest is completed to protect 11 public well sites across two towns, the net cost to Harwich using its CPA funds will be less than \$13,000/acre, thanks to \$1 million in state grants and Town of Chatham participation.

Furthermore, the town-approved, state-approved 2010 Open Space * Recreation Plan clearly states that additional open space purchases are necessary to achieve our community goals. The Open Space Plan survey results show significant support for future open space purchases.

The acreage protected as open space by the town and other entities listed in the LCP (pages 15-16) is unclear and misleading as it is easily confused with other land holdings. The actual percentage of the town that is protected open space is closer to less than one-half of the 21.8% listed.

The LCP language regarding future open space purchases needs to be revised to reflect the above-described points in order to be consistent with the purpose, goals and objectives of the Town of Harwich 2010 Open Space and Recreation Plan.

AFFORDABLE HOUSING

Housing Committee: The Planning Board "initial" priorities are inappropriate, confusing and superfluous. Objective 6.1 clearly defines the process and the parties involved in setting priorities.

Others: Give more emphasis to affordable housing and the value of an integrated, multi-pronged approach. Two of the three Planning Board initial priorities – “encourage re-use of existing housing stock rather than development on vacant land” and “provide rental assistance rather than subsidized home ownership” - are both far too limiting and do not address the clear need for both home ownership and rental programs.

Subsidized home ownership should not be crossed off the list of tools that might be used to increase affordable housing supply. In some circumstances it can be quite useful.

Appendix D – HOUSING PRODUCTION PLAN

Link to
[Housing Production Plan](#)

Appendix E – OPEN SPACE AND RECREATION PLAN

Link to
[Open Space and Recreation Plan](#)

Appendix F - CONSISTENCY WITH REGIONAL POLICY PLAN GOALS

Land Use Goal – LU1: Compact Growth and Resource Protection

To minimize adverse impacts on the land by using land efficiently and protecting sensitive resources, and to create vibrant communities by directing growth and redevelopment to appropriate locations.

Section 5, Growth Management Locations, supports growth in villages and discourages it where it will impact open space resources. See Objectives 5.1, 5.3, 5.9 and 5.10.

Land Use Goal – LU2: Capital Facilities and Infrastructure

To use capital facilities and infrastructure efficiently and in a manner that is consistent with Cape Cod's environment, character, and economic strengths, and that reinforces traditional village centered development patterns.

Objective 5.4 relates transportation infrastructure to East Harwich village planning. Objectives 5.6 and 6.4 support pedestrian/bicycle/transit links to villages. Action 6.5.2 relates wastewater planning to village centers.

Land Use Goal – LU3: Rural Lands

To preserve and enhance rural land uses, including agriculture, that are environmentally compatible with the Cape's natural resources in order to maintain opportunities to enjoy the traditional occupations, economic diversity, and scenic resources associated with rural lands, and to support activities that achieve greater food independence for Cape Cod.

The Natural Assets portion of Section 3 summarizes Town-owned land and other open space in Harwich. Greater detail is provided in Section V and Figure 13 of the 2010 Open Space and Recreation Plan (Appendix E). Cranberry growing, community gardens and other farming opportunities are described in the Agriculture portion of Section 6. The importance of fishing and shell-fishing is noted in the Economic Development portion of Section 6.

Economic Development Goal – ED1: Low-impact and Compatible Development

To promote the design and location of development and redevelopment to preserve the Cape's environment and cultural heritage, use infrastructure efficiently, minimize adverse impacts, and enhance the quality of life for Cape Codders.

The initial page of Section 5, Growth Management Locations, describes the town's history of village-based land use, its continued focus on village planning, and protection of its open space resources. Objectives 5.1 through 5.5 (East Harwich), 5.6 through 5.8 (Harwich Port) and 5.9 (Harwich Center) further support the goal of compatible development.

Economic Development Goal – ED2: A Balanced Economy

To promote a balanced regional economy with a broad business, industry, employment, cultural, and demographic mix capable of supporting year-round and quality employment opportunities.

Economic Development strategies are described in the Economic Development portion of Section 6. They include building on the town's existing character and strengths, addressing seasonal employment issues, taking advantage of Open Cape infrastructure, and encouraging strong Town facilities and services in support of housing, education, etc.

Economic Development Goal – ED3: Regional Income Growth

To promote economic activity that retains and attracts income to the region and benefits residents, thus increasing economic opportunity for all.

The response to Goal ED2 also pertains to this goal.

Economic Development Goal – ED4: Infrastructure Capacity

To provide adequate capital facilities and infrastructure that meet community and regional needs, expand community access to services, and improve the reliability and quality of services.

Section 2, Delivery of Town Services, discusses various challenges relating to provision of infrastructure with an emphasis on wastewater issues. Objectives 2.1 and 2.2 describe the need to provide essential town services supplemented by desired additional services that support the goals of the Comprehensive Plan.

Water Resources Goal – WR1: General Aquifer Protection

To maintain the hydrogeologic balance and quality of Cape Cod's aquifer, considering such factors as groundwater withdrawals, wastewater disposal, stormwater recharge, and adequate surface water levels.

Section IV.C of the Open Space and Recreation Plan provides a thorough discussion of water resource protection issues in Harwich including watershed boundaries and aquifers. Goal VI, Preserve and Enhance Natural Resources including Groundwater and Surface Water, contains a range of actions in support of this goal.

**Water Resources Goal – WR2: Drinking Water Quality and Quantity
(Wellhead Protection Areas and Potential Water Supply Areas)**

To maintain the overall quality and quantity of Cape Cod's groundwater to ensure a sustainable supply of untreated high-quality drinking water.

Goal VI (from above), Objective 1, specifically provides actions to “maintain the overall quality and quantity of Harwich’s ground water to ensure a sustainable supply of high quality, minimally treated drinking water”.

**Water Resources Goal – WR3: Marine Water Embayments and Estuaries
(Marine Water Recharge Areas)**

To preserve and restore the ecological integrity of marine water embayments and estuaries.

The wastewater management portion of Section 6 described 5 estuaries in Harwich that must address water quality issues identified by the Massachusetts Estuaries Project. The town’s extensive wastewater management planning is further described in the balance of this portion of Section 6.

**Water Resources Goal – WR4: Freshwater Ponds and Lakes
(Freshwater Recharge Areas)**

To preserve and restore the ecological integrity of freshwater ponds and lakes.

Goal VI from the Open Space and Recreation Plan, Objective 2, describes measures to preserve and improve the integrity of surface waters including standards for addressing impacts from septic systems, parking areas, and sedimentation; and including restoration projects for priority freshwater habitats.

**Water Resources Goal – WR5: Water Quality Improvement Areas
(Water Quality Impaired Areas)**

To improve impaired water quality in Wellhead Protection, Marine Water Recharge, and Freshwater Recharge Areas.

Section IV.C.2 depicts wellhead protection locations in Harwich. As part of a recommended integrated approach to protect water resources, suggested target areas include pond and lake recharge areas. Marine recharge areas are discussed in Section VII.2 – resource protection needs.

Water Resources Goal – WR6: Public and Private Wastewater Treatment Facilities

To encourage the use of public and private wastewater treatment facilities in appropriate areas where they will provide environmental or other public benefits and where they can be adequately managed and maintained.

Wastewater management is one of the principal planning efforts currently underway in Harwich. The process is described fully in the wastewater management portion of Section 6. Related descriptions are found in Section 2 regarding the cost of providing wastewater infrastructure, Objective 5.2 (East Harwich) and Objective 5.8 (Harwich Port).

Water Resources Goal – WR7: Stormwater Quality

To protect the overall water quality of the aquifer and its resources by minimizing impervious surfaces and improving stormwater quality as much as possible.

Section IV.C. of the Open Space and Recreation Plan discusses impacts from stormwater on drinking water, ponds, lakes and coastal waters. Under recommendations for that section, stormwater management is suggested as part of a mix of water-quality protection strategies.

Coastal Resources Goal – CR1: Maritime Industry, Character, and Public Access

To protect and enhance public and traditional maritime interests and the public trust rights for fishing, fowling, and navigation, to preserve and manage coastal areas so as to safeguard and perpetuate their biological, economic, historic, maritime, and aesthetic values, and to preserve, enhance, and, where appropriate, expand public access to the shoreline.

The importance of the fishing and shellfishing industries is noted in the economic development portion of Section 6. Goal VI from the Open Space and Recreation Plan, Objective 4, specifically provides actions to protect public interests on the coast and public access to the shoreline.

Coastal Resources Goal – CR2: Coastal Hazard Mitigation

To limit development in the coastal zone, particularly high-hazard areas, in order to protect the natural beneficial functions of coastal resources so that they serve to prevent or minimize human suffering and loss of life and property or environmental damage resulting from storms, flooding, erosion, and relative sea-level rise.

Goal VI, Objective 4, also addresses coastal hazard mitigation including steps to prohibit construction on and require minimum setbacks from coastal dunes, require first floor elevation for all new structures above base flood elevation, and establish standards for reconstruction of structures following a natural disaster.

Coastal Resources Goal – CR3: Coastal Water Quality and Habitat

To maintain and improve coastal water quality in all coastal waters and to protect the health of coastal ecosystems.

Goal VI from the Open Space and Recreation Plan, Objectives 5 and 7, recommend a “no boat waste discharge zone” for two Harwich locations and water quality improvement projects adjacent to important shellfish and finfish habitat.

Wetlands Goal – WET1: Wetlands Protection

To preserve and restore the quality and quantity of inland and coastal wetlands and their buffers on Cape Cod.

Goal VI from the Open Space and Recreation Plan, Objective 8, specifically provides actions to “preserve, protect and enhance the quality and quantity of inland and coastal wetlands in Harwich”.

Wildlife and Plant Habitat Goal – WPH1: Prevent Loss, Minimize Adverse Impact, and Maintain Diversity

To prevent loss or degradation of critical wildlife and plant habitat, to minimize the adverse impact of new development on wildlife and plant habitat, and to maintain existing populations and species diversity.

Goal VI from the Open Space and Recreation Plan, Objective 9, specifically provides actions to “prevent the loss or degradation of critical wildlife and plant habitats, minimize the impact of new development on wildlife and plant habitats, and maintain existing populations and species diversity”.

Open Space Protection Goal – OS1: Open Space and Natural Resources

To preserve and enhance the availability of open space that provides wildlife habitat and recreational opportunities, and protects the region’s natural resources and character.

The natural assets portion of Section 3 describes the town’s approach to open space protection. Objective 3.4 specifically focuses on management of open space and Objective 3.5 focuses on selective acquisition of new open space. The theme of open space protections carries throughout the plan, e.g. Objective 5.3 (East Harwich).

Recreation Goal – OS2: Passive/Active Recreation

To preserve and enhance opportunities for passive and active recreation to meet the needs of both residents and visitors.

The recreation portion of Section 3 describes recent recreation improvements, and it further references Appendix I of the Open Space and Recreation Plan. Recreation goals are described in greater detail in Goal IX of that plan.

Transportation Goal – TR1: Safety

To improve safety and eliminate hazards for all users of Cape Cod’s transportation system.

Action 5.4.1 describes planning needs for proposed internal East Harwich village roads and their intersections with Routes 137 and 39. Action 5.9.2 describes steps to improve pedestrian safety in Harwich Center. The transportation portion of Section 6 describes signalization projects at the Exit 10 and Exit 11 interchanges that will improve vehicle safety.

Transportation Goal – TR2: Traffic Reduction/Transportation Balance and Efficiency

To reduce and/or offset the expected increase in motor vehicle trips on public roadways, reduce dependency on automobiles, and reduce air and noise pollution. To promote a balanced and efficient transportation system that includes alternatives to automobile travel.

After discussing highway improvements, the transportation portion of Section 6 describes the town's focus on pedestrian and bicycle facility improvements. The importance of adequate parking and potential for shuttle service also is described in this portion. These goals are supported by Objective 6.4.

Transportation Goal – TR3: Level of Service

To maintain or improve travel times and Level of Service on roads and intersections and to ensure that all road and intersection construction or modifications are consistent with community character, historic resources, and scenic resources.

The transportation portion of Section 6 describes highway improvement projects on Routes 137 and 124 that will benefit traffic flow in Harwich. Objective 5.4 describes the need for Route 137 upgrades to be compatible with village planning for East Harwich.

Waste Management Goal – WM1: Hazardous Materials and Waste Management

To protect Cape Cod's water resources by prohibiting activities that contaminate the water supply, and to support actions by households and businesses that promote the handling, storage, and disposal of hazardous materials and wastes in an environmentally sound manner.

Goal VII of the Open Space and Recreation Plan states objectives and actions to manage hazardous waste management in Harwich.

Waste Management Goal – WM2: Solid Waste Management

To manage solid waste using an integrated solid waste management system that includes waste reduction, recycling, and composting, and to divert 60 percent of municipal solid waste from incinerator and landfill facilities through recycling and composting programs by 2012.

Section 2, Delivery of Town Services, describes the various functions of the Public Works Department including operation of the transfer station/recycle center. The Annual Town Report gives a more complete description of disposal area operations including volume of recycled materials and recycling/reuse programs available to Harwich residents.

Energy Goal – E1: Emissions and Energy Use

To promote a sustainable economic, natural, built, and social environment by reducing greenhouse gas emissions and energy consumption through design and construction practices that increase energy conservation, promote energy efficiency, and promote self sufficiency through the use of locally distributed renewable energy.

The energy portion of Section 6 describes recent energy production and conservation efforts in Harwich. Action 6.8.1 describes a new effort to install a solar power plant at the landfill.

Affordable Housing Goal – AH1: Promotion and Creation of Affordable Housing

To promote the provision of fair, decent, safe, affordable housing for rental or purchase that meets the needs of present and future Cape Cod residents. At a minimum, each town should seek to raise its affordable housing stock to 7.5 percent of all year-round units by 2010, and 10 percent of all year-round units by 2015.

The Housing Goals of the Housing Production Plan cite the importance of meeting the state's 10% affordability goal. A variety of strategies are put forth to accomplish this goal.

Affordable Housing Goal – AH2: Fair Housing/Equal Opportunity

To promote equal opportunity in housing and give special consideration to meeting the housing needs of the most vulnerable segments of the Cape's population, including but not limited to homeless individuals

and families, very low income (50 percent of median income), low income (51–80 percent of median income), single heads of household, racial minorities, and others with special needs.

Sections III, Housing Characteristics and Needs, and VII, Housing Strategies, of the Housing Production Plan provide ample description of the housing needs of vulnerable segments of the Harwich population along with strategies to meet those needs.

Affordable Housing Goal – AH3: Community Participation

To promote the participation of all segments of the community to address the housing needs of Cape Cod residents, with particular attention to the needs of low- and moderate-income households.

The Town’s Affordable Housing goals are described in detail in Section 6 including Objectives 6.1 and 6.2. Further details are provided in the Housing Production Plan (Appendix D).

Heritage Preservation and Community Character Goal – HPCC1: Historic, Cultural, and Archaeological Resources

To protect and preserve the important historic and cultural features of Cape Cod’s landscape and built environment that are critical components of the region’s heritage and economy.

Harwich’s cultural heritage is described in the Cultural portion of Section 3. Objectives 3.1 and 3.2 include actions related to historic districts and historic buildings. Reference is made to the Harwich Heritage Landscape Report for a description of documented cultural heritage resources. Section III.B.4 of the Open Space and Recreation Plan describes archaeological resources in Harwich.

Heritage Preservation and Community Character Goal – HPCC2: Community Character/Site and Building Design

*To encourage redevelopment of existing structures as an alternative to new construction, and to ensure that development and redevelopment respect the traditions and distinctive character of historic village centers and outlying rural areas consistent with *Designing the Future to Honor the Past, Design Guidelines for Cape Cod, Technical Bulletin 96-001, as amended.**

Action 5.9.3 proposes a method of relocating and reusing threatened historic buildings in a village setting. In the affordable housing portion of Section 6, all three Planning Board “initial priorities” encourage reuse of existing structures and location in village settings.

Appendix G – Build-out Study

The Cape Cod Commission conducted a build-out study for Harwich as part of the 1999/2000 EOE report. That report found that Harwich had 3,950 acres of developable land and additional build-out potential of 2,780 dwelling units and 85 acres of commercial/industrial floor area.

Conditions have not changed significantly in Harwich in the past decade. The only major zoning change was adoption of an overlay zoning district for the 1300 acre Six Ponds area bounded by Route 6, Route 137 and Queen Anne Road. For most of the district, residential density was reduced from 1 unit per 40,000 square feet to 1 unit per 100,000 square feet. The net result was a reduction in build-out potential by several hundred dwelling units.

One other major action reduced build-out potential in Harwich – preservation of open space land. Inventories of protected open space were included in the 2000 Harwich Local Comprehensive Plan and the 2010 Harwich Open Space and Recreation Plan. Town-owned land under the control of the Harwich Conservation Commission increased from 718 to 958 acres, an increase of 240 acres. Land acquired by the Harwich Conservation Trust increased from 53 to 338 acres, an increase of 285 acres.

The amount of new development declined in the second half of the past decade:

	New Homes ¹ (dwelling units)	New Commercial/Industrial ² (square feet)
2000 to 2005	552	170,810
2005 to 2010	227	63,586
Total	779	234,396

1) From assessor's summary.

2) From assessor's query and building permit records.

The 2011 Harwich Local Comprehensive Plan proposes study of a number of actions that may affect build-out potential. However, the Planning Board has been cautious about making new build-out projections until more information is known about the cost of wastewater infrastructure. Page 7 of the LCP contains the following highlighted policy statement:

“The Planning Board urges that special attention be given to the issue of wastewater infrastructure. Multi-million dollar estimated construction costs will impact the ability to live and work in Harwich. This Local Comprehensive Plan makes numerous recommendations for study of growth management issues, and decisions based on those studies are premature until more is known about wastewater treatment options and their associated costs.”

The area with the greatest build-out potential is East Harwich. Extensive recent planning efforts for this area are described on pages 20 and 21. However, portions of East Harwich also are located in the Six Ponds overlay district, the Drinking Water Overlay Protection district and the Pleasant Bay watershed. Proposed zoning revisions will directly relate to the town's

approach to wastewater management in East Harwich, as noted in the following proposed action:

- Prepare build-out projections for East Harwich based on proposed zoning revisions. Submit projections to the Wastewater Management Subcommittee for inclusion in the town's wastewater planning. (ACTION 5.2.1, page 21)

Although less extensive than in East Harwich, planning in the villages of Harwich Center and Harwich Port also may impact build-out potential.

- Conduct a cost/benefit analysis of sewerage Harwich Port. Include build-out projections under existing and potential zoning as well as economic development findings from the harbor study. Incorporate results into the town's wastewater planning. (ACTION 5.8.1, pages 24-25)
- Economic development in Harwich Center should recognize two important characteristics – the historic character of the village and its proximity to the rail trail. The scale of additional development in the village should be modest and should build on these elements. (page 25)

Actions outside villages that may impact build-out potential are:

- Due to existing development patterns, commercial zoning on Route 28 should be continued so that current businesses may remain viable. However, future planning will encourage village locations as evidenced by the earlier discussion of Harwich Port. (page 26)
- Due to limited available land, modest expansion of industrial districts may be considered in connection with wastewater planning and other infrastructure capacity. (page 27)

For all of the above actions, the Planning Board will jointly proceed with study of village planning goals, appropriate land use outside villages, and wastewater infrastructure. Build-out potential will be modified as studies proceed.